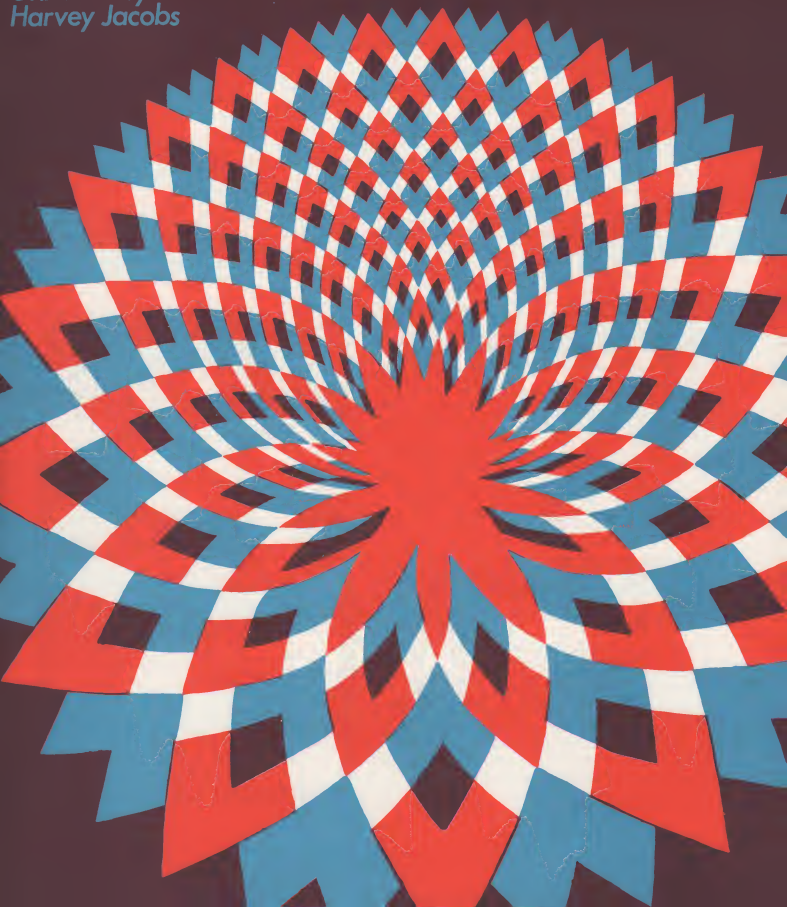


# new worlds

**Astronaut's Bride in  
Bedroom Bust-Up**

Number 193 **3s 6d** 75 cents

**GRAVITY** by  
Harvey Jacobs



# new worlds

Number 193

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# HEADLINE

New Worlds is not a science fiction magazine.

We are not even a short story magazine in the usual sense.

The only key to what we are is our contents. This issue we present a very wide varied range of stories which bear few similarities to one another but, collectively, epitomise the magazine's policy: vitality, imagination and entertainment.

M. John Harrison presents *The Nash Circuit*, latest in our series of Jerry Cornelius stories which aim at being readable and entertaining while at the same time incorporating undertones and imagery of a subtler, more ambiguous sort.

We also include new poetry by D.M. Thomas, one of England's foremost poets whose work has several times been broadcast by the BBC. Thomas's poetry is emotionally rich and full of direct, human appeal; but it is always splendidly controlled.

A similar awareness of human situations and emotions is shown by Harvey Jacobs whose *Gravity* is our lead story this issue. So much has been written about the astronauts, their lives, their families and person-

an irresistible appeal.

A nastier, more jaundiced view of contemporary America is contained in Norman Spinrad's *The Entropic Gang-Bang Caper*. This is satire by exaggeration and distortion; it is clever, sophisticated and funny, which is more than can be said of most current American Social Comment.

Lastly Jon Hartridge makes his first appearance in New Worlds with *Like Father*, a story which is unmistakably 'conventional' science fiction. The assumptions and the events are in science fiction traditions, and the writing is conventional in form, proving our contention that it is still possible to write a sound, literate, entertaining science fiction story which doesn't read (as most 1960s sf does) as if it had been written fifteen years ago.

Jon Hartridge recently had his first book *Binary Divine*, published by MacDonald, and is well into his second novel. He is married with two children and lives near Oxford.

Regular readers will note that this New Worlds has fewer pages than previously.

The reason is one of economics: for the past six months we have been losing £300 per issue in printing costs over sales revenue.

It was exactly two years ago that we decided it was worthwhile, regardless of the risks involved, to transform New Worlds from a poorly printed monthly paperback book into a larger, semi-glossy magazine. Our troubled history since then has already been recounted (New Worlds number 183).

This year we have continued to receive praise and encouragement for our format and its contents, and our distributors have succeeded in increasing our readership.

Unfortunately, however, the increase is not sufficient to meet the following setbacks:

Newagents and bookshops are

always unwilling at the best of times to sell a magazine which is not bought in very large quantities and which does not conform to any of the usual categories. One national wholesale-retain chain abandoned us completely two months ago, and we have always been painfully aware that the other major chain, W.H. Smith, leave it to the discretion of individual shop managers whether or not a magazine is stocked. More often not, they decide not to bother with New Worlds.

Added to troubles at home, we have been banned, on grounds of content, in South Africa and Australia.

It has been suggested to us that to continue trying for national distribution is hopeless, and that we should become one of many 'little magazines' selling through the few progressive bookshops in Britain.

But we are not a 'little' magazine. We have no intention of compromising and becoming just another semi-professional quarterly selling 400 copies or less. We are committed to continuing on a national scale regardless of difficulties. We have a renewed Arts Council grant, we have the support of a growing number of subscribers, and our circulation, when one discounts the lost overseas markets and the recent loss of certain British outlets, has grown very healthily since our new distributors took over in January.

If the circulation continues to grow, we can return to our larger format. But this is in the hands of our readers. You, as readers, can help us most by taking out a subscription (see the form opposite), or, as a second-best, by asking your local newsagent or bookshop to stock us, regularly. (Our distributors are Moore Harness who, in collaboration with wholesalers, can get New Worlds to anywhere in Britain).

We are certain beyond any doubt at all that there is a potential readership interested in New Worlds. Our problem lies in reaching this readership — making our magazine available to it.



Hartridge: 'conventional'

alities; but none of it has been perceptive or really revealing. Harvey Jacobs endows the myth-figures with an everyday human situation and goes further, writing with gentle humour and a delicate style which gives the story

# Gravity

## HARVEY JACOBS

I AM BOGARDUS BLIK. But I use the name *Morris Nucleus* in my writings.

*Nucleus*, naturally, for direct association with the Atomic Age of which I am the proudest citizen. *Morris* because that name has always been exotic to me—musky, tumescent, hairy, benevolent, and the wise kind of shy.

My actual name will be new to you. My *nom de plume* will mean nothing. Don't sweat.

I have been innocuous as a pebble. I work as a computer programmer in a bank just outside Houston, Texas. I hardly socialize. I live alone in a rented room. And I have published nothing. Not yet. With reason. I am saving.

When my work is done to satisfaction I will release it, ah, it will fall off by itself. Then you will know me. I will be a household word in palaces of power and workers' flats. Such fame will follow that a sun will blaze always in my mottled eyes. Notoriety is pain. I despise it. But it is inevitable since the work I am coping with is epic. And I am more *humorous* than *posthumous* by nature.

For now I relish privacy and the dank-dark of obscurity. Later I will suffer plenty from flashbulbs burning the skin off my bones. So let these be tranquil years, years of sweet study and discipline, years of peace.

*Damn it, why do they pick at me? Am I a dessert? Yes, in a way.*

I am watching television. A cub of a poetess in a literary magazine described the light of television as "blue cellophane". Lovely and accurate. I wrote her a letter. The blue cellophane crackles through my room. There on the launch pad at Cape Kennedy (Cape Canaveral to my soul—I have never accepted the change) is the latest of our Moonships poised and smoldering like a young phallus. Look at it and sing.

Morris Nucleus sits eating a mallomar straining for flight. I feel the selfish power of that steaming rocket. I have all to do to keep from yanking myself around the room by my organ. Not in the spirit of a *Portnoy* who masturbates to pull things from within. In the spirit of *Icarus*, in an age beyond wings. It is marvelous to be alive at this hour. We are spreading the legs of the Universe. We will be remembered, if there are memories at work.

Only yesterday I read that 53.2 per cent of our population would divert finds from the Space Program. The poor idiots fail to comprehend. I am last to blame them. The New Technology has not communicated its mystique or its message. The sheep see Science as a diplomat of death. Why not? Who has shown them a neutron smiling? They have seen smoking Japs. When my book is published things will be different. They will clamor. There will be demonstrations. Flowers will cover our laboratories. Cut the Space budget? Castrate God?

*Give me time. I need time and leisure. Cancer, go home.*

They are counting down. Emotion puffs my blue cellophane bag. Ten. Nine. Eight. Seven. Six. Aieeee. There is trouble. The countdown is holding. My insides are ignited. Let me off the ground!

The smooth voice of Mission Control. The trouble is minor. Nothing. It is repaired. Now. Five. Four. Three. Two. One. Zero. Blastoff. What a word! Oops. I am lifting. I am pushing. I am a rising vibration. I am gone.

Minutes into my flight I detach my first stage. I wait, count seconds, burn. My second stage is gone. My useless leaden ass falls backward into water. I have attained orbital velocity. Glory to this glorious nation and the glories known and unknown and boons and gifts she has bequeathed. Oh beautiful for spacious skies. Oh beautiful. I would not like to be a Bulgarian sulking at home today. Of course we fly for Bulgarians too but it is better to be part of the heart. And this is an American story.

An animation is on the screen. Jules Bergman tells me that my Spaceship is streaking around the globe. We have made another star. Inside there are men and they are giants. I am proud for every race.

*Why am I listed? Soon the telephone will ring.*

THE TELEPHONE RINGS. Little bitch. Our Ship is barely in range of the Canary Islands tracking station much less Jodrell Bank. Fleshmonger. She must begin her dialing, area code and all, at the moment of liftoff. She must wait for the last digit. She knows how I feel about actual staging and confirmation of apogee and perigee. She knows by now. When it is determined that the mission is

safely away she tugs at the dial. And my passive turd of a Princess phone does its *ding*. This cretin answers.

"Huh? What is it?" (My voice is rage and rejection.)

"Morris?" (Honey flows out of my Princess' tunnel.)

"Don't ever call me that." (A spasm, not a voice.)

"Bogardus, then." (She is really frightened.)

"Yes." (Mellowing. Why?)

"You know who this is, don't you?" (Bathwater on soapy thighs.)

"I know." (A shortness of breath. My plague.)

"Did you watch? He got off all right." (Would she call through tragedy?)

"Of course I watched. What would I do, not watch?" (I am too soft.)

"Then come to me." (Leaves from last summer blowing in new spring wind.)

"You can't be serious. We pledged . . ." (Liquid oxygen turning to mist.)

"Bogardus, I need you. I can't help the way I feel. And it's the only time we can be absolutely sure." (Petulant appetite. I feel her wet.)

"It is not right. It is wrong."

"How can anything so . . . holy . . . be wrong? You'll come. I know you won't leave me like this."

"You trade on my worst instincts. You interrupt my work. You make stalactites grow from my soul. You give me such astonishing guilt that I'll end up like a parsnip. Oh, I'll come. I'll lumber over. But you won't get one hot drop out of me, not this time."

"Let me try."

"Then try, bitch. You risk a noisy divorce. I risk damnation. A hell of a lot you care."

"I care so I'm careful. Hurry, dear fool."

"If I leave now I will arrive before first pictures are sent live. Is your television working?"

"Yes. The color is fabulous. You won't miss anything. And if you do you can see it all on the Late News."

"I am not interested in the Late News."

"Then stop talking and move yourself."

"What about the press?"

"Been and gone. The kids are with mother. They won't be back until splashdown. It's a five day mission, Bogardus."

"I was just getting into Chapter Nine."

"Hurry."

"Yes. I'm already out the door."

*Forgive me Chapter Nine. Forgive me neighbors in my century. I know your needs. But I have mine.*

On the bus going toward the Space Center I have a lovely fantasy, the kind that eats like acid at your own intestines. I am dead and being judged by my peers. The charge is procrastination and fornication. They sit listening as my life is read from a lucite roll—Goddard, Melies, Tsolkovski, Verne, Avicenne, Von Guericke, Von Humboldt, Gauss, de Vinci, Euler, Kepler, Mercator, Stefanic, Caldas, Boskovic, Roemer, Kuang Chi, Nervander, Le Sage, Poincare, Laplace, Flammarion, Newton, Verrier,



Pope Sylvestre II, Gallelio, Eddin, Maimonides, Einstein, Huyghens, Kimura, Lomonsov, Koulibine, Arrhenius, Swedenborg, Struve, Gokman, Kucera, Planck, Curie, Mrs Curie, Röntgen, Perrin, Lavosier, Becquerel, Bohrs, Democritus, Mendeliev, Bjerknes and assorted Chinese. Every one has had a postage stamp for a tombstone. Oh, it is old home week.

I stand naked at an aluminum podium struck silent. My jury mutters back and forth in the poetry of equations. As witnesses for the prosecution empty pages fly like unformed foeti through that chamber of dreams. The faces of husbands I have wronged, wearing the helmets and goggles of their occupation, flash wildly on a cinemascope screen.

Then the jury of genius, men I know and love more than my family, begin a slow tapping at their privates. Tap tap. Thump thump. The din grows. Should I plead? It would be out of order. *Responsibility* is the subject, really, and I have no case. Guilty, I am sentenced to eternal wakefulness. I will hang in other as a footnote suspended from a page as blank as the endless light. The bus reaches my stop. I am trembling as I navigate the aisle.

*But I am trembling as much from anticipation of her starved, stunning body as I am from the anger of those educated eyes.*

**C**LAMS ON THE half-shell and navel oranges. Her fridge is filled with them. And Bonbell cheese, which I also like. Phosphorous, proteins, vitamins and minerals that go straight to the genitals is the name of her game.

"You should live in trees that give fruit every day. Ripe, gushy fruit like fresh figs. You are an animal."

"I would rather be a bird than an animal, Bogardus, if it's all the same to you."

"So. A bird. Eat, tweet, flutter, evacuate and lay eggs. I ask myself a thousand times, 'Why did *he* marry *you*?' "

"You know we met at college. He was so specialized. I was drifting in Liberal Arts. We had plenty for each other in those long-ago days."

"Do you have Jules Bergman's station turned on? He is the only one who knows anything about it up there."

"The TV is on in the bedroom."

"Naturally. Hey, how do you live with yourself?"





"I don't want to live with myself. That's why you're here, Bogardus. Lord, where did you get that outfit? Green slacks, a blue jacket, a plaid shirt and brown tie. Your hair is standing like Dr Zorba's. And its receding. You've lost whole tufts since I saw you right over your forehead. Look at your shoes. And that beard looks like an abandoned nest. You don't take care of yourself."

"Now tell me my belly is hanging over my belt."

"I noticed."

"You look lovely. Not a blemish."

"Thank you, Bogardus. I know how hard it is for you to spare me any candy."

"It's the truth."

It is. She looks lovely as a sunshower. I was in a growl

when I came sneaking like a mole to her back door. A mole at the bung of the split-level built and furnished by a great national magazine in exchange for the exclusive rights to *his* memoirs. What would they give for hers? An igloo in Zambia. When she opened her door to me she wore only a turkish towel, a pink affair with flowers. She dropped it and came into my arms.

"Are you advertising your thing to the street? Cover yourself."

"Cover me."

"This is ridiculous. Impossible. You're getting worse. You carry on like a yippie. Act your age, damnit. Keep some grace and style. We don't live in the zoo."

"I'm penitent, Bogardus. How do I feel to your touch?"

"Delicious."

"Come have a surprise. Look in the refrigerator."

And there they are, clams, oranges and cheese. She knows my taste for bivalves, citrus and Bonbell. They are aphrodisiac. And I am no teenager. My fountain needs priming. I am ugly and slowing down but I always have women. I am some kind of toy to them.

*On hard nights I go over the names of the girls I have penetrated. I list them. I divide them into the beautiful, the near-beautiful and the unbeautiful. The married, the unmarried. The young and old. The mothers, the childless. The Christians, Jews, Quakers, Adventists, Buddhists, Mohammadians and B'hais. The fat and thin. The white, black, yellow, red and in-between shades. I break them into luscious categories. One time. Twice. Thrice. Good. Bad. Winners, losers. I arrange them by alphabet. I count them. I lump them. Then I sleep.*

"Are you hungry, darling?"

"As a whale."

Let's nibble, then. I'll take plates into the bedroom. Go, be comfortable and watch the tube."

"Why do you call the miracle of television 'the tube'? I dislike that expression. Do you do it to detract from the marvel? To drag down? Does that give you pleasure, saying 'the tube'?"

"It's an expression the children use."

"And you let them use it?"

"Please, go inside. There's a robe if you want one. And slippers. I'll get the goodies."

"Goodies. There's another lovely crappy word."

"The nutrients. The food. Is that better?"

"To my ear, yes. If you're getting food say it that way."

"I'll get food."

"Bravo."

"You are in a mood. You need a long massage, Bogardus, and you're going to get one, toes to nose."

"Your hands are cool authority. I am grateful for those hands."

"That's good of you to say, Bogurdus, considering how disturbed your feelings are. God, I'm thankful that I'm not a deep person."

"You are deep. Deeper than deep. Deep."

"I'll rush."

"Yes. Rush. Deep as deep. Making love with you is like drilling for offshore gold. Really."

"You turn me on."

"I turn you on! That's three gorgeous phrases in three

minutes."

"I'll shut up, Bogardus. I promise to please you soon and make restitution for my lackings."

"A lick for a lack."

"What a mind you have, Bogardus. What a sense of humor."

Later I draw slow circles on her belly with one finger. My perfume is on her breath. I splash into her and my gravy runs through her terrain like vapor. She feeds me a Cherrystone while I peel an orange with one hand.

"You love to take squishy creatures out of the security of their shells. Creatures like me. You pry us open and suck our juices, pearls, everything."

"It's you who are eating the clams, Bogardus."

"I saw you eat at least three. Besides, I am speaking in simple symbols."

"Symbols or thimbles, clams don't make pearls. On top of that, this month has no R in it."

"Well, you've destroyed this conversation. You make rubble and garbage out of ideas."

"You're an idea factory, Bogardus. Don't begrudge me a few measly ideas. Be generous."

Another report from the Spaceship is due in half-an-hour. But the television is left on in case of emergency. In the space race one never knows and the hazards—the terrible hazards—lurk everywhere. We are just babies in the cosmos and an alien form.

"How is your work coming?"

"The words come like snails."

"Are you pleased with it?"

"Yes and no. I don't know if it's worth it. Yes, I know it's worth it."

"I'm sure."

"You are sure of nothing except that you must get yours. The only thing you're sure of is that you want Bogardus Blik's pole in your throbbing hole."

"Be crass if you want to. But don't sit up to yell at me. Just rest, Bogardus. I have a gift for you."

"Oh, wow, ah, Jesus Christ, oh darling, how that feels."

"Thank you, Bogardus. But you don't have to say a single word."

*A sea is torn from me. I let it go. As it flows I think that I have lost enough little sperms to fill a cathedral with bright faces. Where are my unborns? Also, there is more waste. I am sublimating my writing. I do not share those thoughts with her. She is busy anyhow. I stroke her silk hair and rub her shoulders. She moans.*

**A**FTER REST I ask her if she can say that her children are also his.

"Do you want me to answer?"

"Yes."

"I'm pretty sure of two. The third might be yours."

"Werner?"

I roll her over and slap her behind. My hand leaves its map. You can see my life line.

"You are getting a varicose vein on your left thigh."

"Bogardus, love me a little."



"I love you a lot. I also hate every cell. With red hate. Pus hate. Hate."

"I know all that."

"You have no patriotism. You have no sense of what your husband is doing. You have no comprehension of the religious nature of his vocation much less of the blind courage and dedication. Married to him you should feel like the priestess of a gleaming tomorrow. You shouldn't involve yourself in adultery."

"It's partly that they train them so hard, Bogardus. Everything is hardware, hardware. Have some mercy for me. The only part of the whole ball of wax that I like is when they talk about the umbilical cords. The rest is cold glass and berillium."

"Do you know how much I envy your husband?"

"Yes, I do."

"He is perfectly Apollonian, pure, strong, clear as a lamp. He is an action man. In me dregs of seminal wine

pollute my blood. I moved across the land to Houston to be near the great computers that direct the Space Program and I meet you."

"At a supermarket no less. You were arguing about the plumpness of a barbecued chicken. And you turned to me to act as impartial arbitrator. Impartial. You didn't even suspect that I had watched you push your cart in that bent-over way you have for days and weeks before we ever spoke. I dreamed of knowing you."

"And I of knowing you. Which does not alter the fact that your husband walks in space. I walk on ladies."

"Don't pluralize. That's insulting. You walk on me."

"Imagine stepping out into a weightless world."

"Bogardus, if a person ejaculates in space are they propelled backwards?"

"Ask your husband."

"He would give me a programmed answer. Don't you see?"

"Imagine making love in a weightless world."

"Attached to the mother ship by an umbilical."

"Look, frankly that word *umbilical* bothers me. It downgrades the entire vocabulary of the Program. Do you notice how Jules Bergman winces when he uses that word? He must feel in his heart as I do. *Tether* is enough."

"You put me down every chance you get, Bogardus. Well, go ahead. Put me down. So long as you jump on top of me. I don't care for your words. I don't care if you roast a billion years with recrimination. I am only selfish when it comes to you. I adore the way you glump around like a teddy bear. I go to butter when you touch me with your chubby hands. When I feel you swelling up despite yourself I die. When I kiss you I let myself go into you and I get me back down below. As for the marriage, I do my part. I give interviews about how I wasn't nervous while he was up there and how glad I am that he came down intact. And I do worry about him. Don't you think I don't remember how it was back in college? He's the father of most of my children. I love him, Bogardus, in my fashion. If that's what bothers you, know I love him. But you are simply another story. And that's the way of it."

"Give me a clam."

"Give me a section of orange."

*Why do I come here? Discovery would mean instant dismissal from the bank and international mortification. Chapter Nine was moving like water. It's a crucial chapter. It relates my theory to the emotions. Why don't I have my scrotum filled with plaster?*

"Take me."

"But there is a report due in seconds from the capsule."

"Do me and watch at the same time."

"Your own husband is reporting live on the first attempt at docking and you want me to do you and watch at the same time?"

"They dock. We dock."

"Now its you with the humor. Did He who made the lamb make thee?"

"Yes. I swear it. Now take me, Bogardus, Morris, whoever you are."

There is Jules Bergman with urgency in his voice.

"Gently. Please. Gently. Nice."

I suspected complication. There is a slow water leak into a battery that connects with a generator.

"Oh, good. Good. There, yes. Like that."

The generator is vital. It helps cool a motor involved with re-circulation of coolants involved with the heating system. If the heating system should be impaired in the sub-frigid void of hostile space, all is lost.

"Quicker. You're breaking me. Quicker. You're touching my center. I'm coming. I'm coming."

Jules Bergman is definitely worried.

"Ow. Yow. Oooo. Yes. More. Now. Now."

If he is worried there is worry. Here comes the announcement. They will scrap the mission. The mission is failed. Down they come.

"Now. Now. Now. Now. Oh, dear, wonderful, splendid, man."

Down. Millions of dollars, gone. Hours of preparation, gone. So what? We will try again and next time we will prevail.

"I am exhausted. I feel like a beach. Oh, thank you."

Failure is the price of success. Now, I suppose 55.4 per cent will vote to cut funds.

"The mission is over. They are bringing them down."

"Oh no."

"Say at least thank heaven the men are spared."

"Thank heaven the men are spared. Give me a towel or build us an ark. I'm making a lake."

"Won't reporters ask for your reaction?"

"Any minute. I've got to get to the shower."

"You see? You see the price of our shame?"

"It was worth any price, Bogardus."

"Shower. And change your facial expression. You are smiling slightly with that enigmatic it's-still-inside grin. Your face is flushed. Compose yourself, please."

"Don't worry."

"The doorbell. I hear the doorbell."

"Just take your clothes and go into the broom closet. I'll say I'm too upset to talk. I'll use statement A-15 which covers this. I'll say I'm upset but confident."

"You want me to stand in the broom closet?"

"Take an orange, darling, I'll be back in a jiff. Then we'll take one of our famous bubble baths."

"Oh sure. We'll splash-splash for the Associated Press. Maybe the President will call. They do that."

"The broom closet, Bogardus."

I go into the broom closet. I close the door. There is me. And some brooms. A mop. A folded ironing board. And detergent. We make a quaint grouping.

I eat my orange in the dark. I hear her running on bare feet. Even the sound of her arches excites my outrageous balls.

*While I wait I will use the time to think. About repression, elimination, definition, construction, conquest and liberation. The repression of war. The elimination of disease and hunger. A clear definition of life and death. The construction of alabaster cities. Conquest of the galaxy. The liberation of love through vigorously applied Technology. I will think about Chapter Ten. ■*



# poems by D.M.thomas

## 1. X

Suddenly certain he was not alone,  
His dreaming muscles tensed forward in the seat.  
The white hand of a gauge showed more than one  
Body in the cabin radiating heat.

O obeying the tacit order of the hand  
He strode to the small closet in the rear,  
Used for supplies, uttered a harsh command,  
The blaster cradled at his hip. The door

Swung open on the stowaway — a girl.  
She stepped forth, arms embracingly raised. He  
backed

Away from the placating, waiting smile  
Of a child caught in some compromising act

That might bring thunder down or mild reproof,  
The gun dropped nervelessly.

She sat by him,  
Cowed by the way his eyes remained aloof,  
Unsoftened. He pressed a switch, and  
through dim

Static which was eight light years' colloquy  
Of waves, signalled the mother ship as it flew  
Through hyperspace. Moments elapsed. A grey  
Peremptory voice entered the craft: he knew

The rule; he must jettison. He heard  
A gasp spring from her lips that stood out red  
Against the sudden chalk. Computers whirled  
Almost audibly in the distant *Stardust*, stated

That she must go by nineteen ten. The hand  
Of the chronometer stood at eighteen ten.

1810

*I* So dumb, he thought... She did not understand,  
*was* She of the friendly world, that here where man  
*born* Pushed back the pitiless frontiers of his mind  
*under* The cold equations make the laws. She gripped  
*a* The seat edge, white knuckles holding down blind  
*black* Panic. *I thought you would be pleased*, she kept

*sun.* Whispering, *now you say I have to die!*  
*Everyone* He explained the law: how h amount of fuel  
*pretends* Would power a craft with a mass of m in safety;  
*to* Add x to m, it would not reach its goal.

*want* She was the x. And nothing could be done.  
*her,* Her weight would crash them, metalflesh deep in soil.  
*and* No one wanted it this way. No one. No one.  
*doesn't*

1815

*want* Man flew, harnessed to drives beyond control.

*her.* He forced himself to look at her. Emotions  
*I've* He buried deep along the frontier, stirred.  
*the* She seemed to have taken in the cold equations  
*Tree* Though seeming locked against his patient words

*of* Explaining how electrical pulses had  
*Life* Worked out the moment when the captain *must*  
*in* Decelerate, toward the Woden landing pad.  
*me,* Beyond that point, even a grain of dust

*her* Became appreciable mass. He put his arm  
*breasts* About her shoulder; she turned to him a face  
*are* So like his own—fine marble sculpted from  
*apples.* His crude, eroded rock. This was no place

- I've* Nor time for all the memories that thronged  
*ten* Into his brain. He had no answer to  
*nipples* That face's plea for hope. Mercy belonged  
*and* To a world the moon-launched space ship did not know.  
*all*  
1820 *the* There, her plight would have alarmed the globe,  
*bones* A dozen rescue craft would have zoned in;  
*of* Here, at the limits of man's endless probe,  
*a* The seas were vast, the island peoples thin.  
*brigade* Not unlike Earth, the planet Woden hung,  
*of* Blue-hazed with atmosphere, in the viewscreen;  
*the* Great Manning's Continent began to swing  
*Highland* Into night. On its already darkening Plain  
*Light* of the Immaculate Computer, eleven  
*Infantry.* Dying men waited for serum. Should  
*I'm* One man be saved, to destroy eleven? —even  
*McBride,* If the strict-programmed *Stardust* stopped, or slowed,  
*your* To let him catch up? Her eyes brimmed with tears,  
*bride,* Dumbly she shook her head, and loosed her hold  
*I'm* On him. Love could not conquer the light years.  
*a*  
1825 *no un,* He murmured something, keeping his voice cold,  
*a noun,* Impersonal. A trembling hand undid  
*a nun,* A button of her white blouse, clumsy thumbs  
*a* Fumbled a thin gold chain over her head.  
*no one.* His eyes evaded the accusing name  
*I'm* On the plastic identity disc; briefly her weight  
*the* Impressed itself on his brain: 110  
*prairie,* Pounds... little, but even less would seal the fate  
*She's* Of a space capsule frail-walled as the skin  
*the* Of a foetus. She whispered, would it get  
*ruined* To her mother, eventually? He nodded,  
*city.* Placed it, with trembling hand, in his grey shirt  
*She's* Pocket. Sensitive nipple felt the solid  
*the* Chaingold, and the lightweight catalogue  
*ghost* Of letters and numbers she was changing to.  
1830 *the* He pretended to busy himself with the ship's log,  
*weed* Aware of the terror that was pulling her through  
*garden.* The door of the airlock, and beyond. If he  
*Deep* Could put in her hand some stay against the night,  
*in* Glimmers of heaven above the limbo she  
*me* Would drift in, slowly, down to Woden... But  
*somewhere* He sought in vain. The *Stardust* and its brood  
*is* Carried no bibles' unnecessary mass.  
*the* Only the log book and their sacred word,  
*bright* The *Interstellar Regulations, class*  
*gold,* 3 — *Galactic Frontier Flights.* He clenched his hands  
*the* Helplessly. Nor was there 'up' and 'down',  
*pearl* Heaven and hell, where the body slowly spins.  
*at*  
1835 *the* Comb in her hand sleepwalking through her brown  
*bottom* Hair sent a pang of longing through him. Had  
*of* He allowed his child to live, hers would have been  
*the* Just this rich colour; the same age; same red  
*sea.* Lips, (her cheeks had lost some pallor), same gamine  
*I'm* Attractiveness, (on her forehead the mole  
*the* Inherited from him). She stared at the dial  
*occidental* Whose terminator moved upon her soul,  
*sun,* —Ultimate dark of the world, insane denial  
*the* Of the thoughts she thought with. Its shadow crept  
*accidental* Over a continent vaster than Manning's. Could

- son,  
I  
wasn't  
born
- 1840
- As if, somehow, she understood
- I  
was  
crushed  
out.
- His search for miracles to make her end  
Bearable, she rose and stood by him.  
A tear smudged the report he'd have to send  
The *Stardust* records in thirty minutes time.
- You're  
leally  
lovely  
lively
- One thing, she said, that he could do, that he had sought  
To do for so long. Now she was prepared.  
She was his bride, his nun. Under the weight  
Of his kisses her lips forced open like an air-
- life,  
you  
destroy  
me
- Lock closing for the last deep opening.  
The room spun in her head like a space-top.  
Ungravitied she rose, observed the swing  
Of a red iron cauterize tongue, lips,
- with  
a  
red  
hot
- Breasts, loins. Blue petals flowered under  
His teeth. From an alp of love she watched tissues  
Explode in poignant tenderness and wonder.  
Her ribs and diaphragm crushed, her lungs issuing
- 1850
- iron,  
burn  
my
- From her mouth stretchedwide to its limits like  
Space-debris.
- 1855
- heart,  
cut  
out
- Deep-frozen catafalques, her lids  
Opened after two million years that took  
An instant. He clambered from her, slid
- my  
legs,  
hands,  
tongue,
- His right hand from her buttock to her left  
Breast, squeezed it lustlessly once, and lay  
Still, eyes closed. He readjusted the soft  
Penis that had ridden up like a skirt. Furtively
- breasts.  
I'm  
the  
Destroyer
- His eyes flickered toward the chronometer;  
She caught the movement, followed it. Her mind  
Grasped at nothing now, willed it to enter her,  
Cremated the remains of life, as at the end
- of  
Life.  
I'm
- Of some school holiday; walked to meet it.
- 1900
- wasted  
time.  
Not
- She reached  
For her bag, and slowly combed down her hair.  
Her clothes could be jettisonned after. She watched  
The vertical hand tense for the turn. Her bladder
- mothered,  
smothered.  
I'm  
thousands.  
She's
- And bowels warned, but she refused their stark  
Parental commands. There was no point. She touched  
Her lips with a bullet-head of red that shook.
- 1905
- self-sufficient.  
She's  
the  
self-possessed.
- He pulled the black lever. She turned. The thatch  
Of glowing hair moved steadily to the airlock.  
He did not try to help, she would not want it.  
She faced him, inside, throat pulsing. The door's quick  
Barrier slid between them. Her final thought,
- A  
child  
has  
been
- Cervixed in blackness, was that her womb began  
To flower with child. And her child's child,  
Jettisonned. A womb within a womb within  
An airlock. Swiftly, decisively, he pulled
- murdered.  
It's
- A red lever.
- 1910
- a  
terrible  
thing  
for
- The ship wavered slightly as air  
Gushed from the lock, a vibration to the wall  
As though something had bumped the outer door  
In passing. *I love you*, he said. The ship fell
- a  
girl  
to
- Smoothly again, decelerating now  
Toward Woden. A ghost had been exorcised.  
Something shapeless and ugly as an embryo

*be* Hurried before him through limbo. Hooks and eyes  
*the* Scattering the floor shocked him; she returned  
*rain;* For an instant. He re-ejected her. Equation  
 Balanced, he dismissed the ghost from his tired mind,  
 Settling to the long deceleration.

*Note: the poem is based on The Cold Equations, a story by Tom Godwin. The marginal words are taken from the case history of Julie, summarised in R.D.Laing's study*

*of schizophrenia, The Divided Self, and are her words almost verbatim. Typically of an advanced schizophrenic, she refers to herself in the first and third person.*

## 2. Grief

Days passed.  
 In foam-beds  
 of a small ivory case  
 at the back  
 of a locked drawer  
 gathering cobwebs  
 in the sheeted room,  
 two contact lenses  
 secreted tears.

As the damp rose,  
 floating them,  
 they felt the flex  
 of their amputated  
 irises,  
 to sunsets  
 along motorways  
 or to windblown skirts,  
 still more and more.

A grit of grief  
 blinded them,  
 like the dust  
 raised by  
 musty cattletrucks  
 of their small town.

## 3. End of a Viking Settlement

*(The Sandnes skeletons: remains of a man, woman and child, with a small wood cross between: Sandnes, Greenland, c.1300.)*

Where the northbeating raven headed, founded  
 a home

Between glacier and volcano, Thor's hell  
 And Christ's. But this butter-iceland palled.

Adrift,

Storm-driven north, coast they found

Where the only greenness clutched

The fissures of the sea edge; grimly called

This haven Greenland. Daysummers fished the  
 bleak fjords;

Nightwinters under driftwood huts, forged sagas  
 Feud-red, hard-edged with gutterals like expelled  
 Breaths, or their swords. But swords were too  
 mild, they beat

Them into ploughshares to sow meagre  
 Cornharvests; worshipped a Sun that lay lower  
 And longer than Thor's under the blue glacier;  
 Drove rotting prow to where the Light was  
 darkest.

The seas froze solid; no ships  
 From mother-Europe rounded to this Thule;  
 Foraging south, skraelings slit lean throats,

Loosed thin blood weakened wuth hunger and  
 black

Death. Graves grew shallower as the  
 ice thickened.

See the skeletons at Sandnes: such  
 Untouchable harmony surprised in the brown loam.

Man, wife; hipbone to hip-

Bone; skulls turned

Aside; the child's skull

Tilted forward by the mother's chin, as a child  
 who is held

Up asleep on a journey; a wooden cross

By her elbow, that gathers his ribs, the arc

Of his spine into her bones, in love's starkest  
 Geometric plane. These relics — the cast swords,

Shears, anvils, rasps, of their mood — this  
 foamwake left

By their beaked passage, will dissolve further.  
 Fleshhome was, bonehouse will be, too mild.

They drift

Toward the wintered pole,

Following the third raven wherever it flies,  
 Driftwood wherever it floats:

Stormier auroras, murkier, blue-white-icier;

Each coast is greener than the land before.

## 4. Yseult

We strain a corpse to  
us all the difference  
he notices is  
white suspenderbelt  
black bleached hair brunette  
working on him it  
doesn't matter who

does it rather which  
does it neither of  
us is a person  
to him bulb flashes  
his face blocked by mine  
as our hands caress  
him you stupid bitch

you're going to cry  
any moment that  
would look good in his  
hall of statues he'd  
rather have his desk  
full of statues than  
real women why

she could almost be  
my daughter her hand  
like mine as it was  
lying each side his  
thigh limp as a sleeve  
our engagement rings  
identical three

diamonds one day she'll  
have a gold one too  
fingers will swell won't  
always keep her shape  
I can't pull mine off  
even for this he says  
it adds to the thrill

anything sacred  
beautifully white  
her complexion I  
wonder what makes her  
do this money she'll  
get hard quick still she's  
got youth I can't fight

against this middle age  
God it's like the  
country I came from  
slate cottages and  
granite primitive  
chapel the odd wind-  
bent thorn tree a cage

of old clay-dumps rain  
pizzling the goss-moor  
of course having him

helps this will pay for  
his new uniform  
I'd like to go back  
there and start again

the love of a son  
isn't enough he  
will grow away love  
someone else he needs  
affection like me  
depraved minds men have  
this bush when it's blown

up large will be like  
a forest when he  
sees it under  
cellophane will he  
realise that it's  
his own property  
and that he can take

it back willingly  
that I only let  
other men trespass  
in it to goad him  
into showing a  
single moment's  
jealousy

we could be mother  
and daughter or wife  
and his mother  
washing the body  
for burial  
dividing the parts  
in grief together

except this brute I  
am told to grasp while  
her mouth God knows why  
has to pretend  
to suck my nipple  
once he was jealous  
even of a puppy

frisking under dress  
petticoat my hair  
amess laughing made  
me swear an oath  
my fingers circling  
a red-hot poker  
not to dance unless

I was with him  
now I have to make  
infidelities  
so that his lust can  
glow for an instant  
that day he took me

naked by the stream  
ready to plunge then  
wouldn't have it  
developed jealous  
that someone else would  
have to see me now  
I don't think he can  
fuck without a lens

was it yes the same  
day loving under  
trees we suddenly  
sensed someone watching  
saw two shadows fall  
we dragged on our clothes  
our faces aflame

a man and a woman  
we thought we saw in  
the branches laughing  
but there was nothing  
a trick of the light  
in the leaves but that  
man and woman ran

after us until  
our wedding day I  
thought we were happy  
then on our bed I  
realised that his  
brain had crystallised  
an icicle

and laid it between  
us he brings some new  
props for the last set  
three wineglasses drained  
on the table to  
suggest dutch lust wants  
the camera seen

reflected in my  
pupil in the close-  
up over his shoulder  
at the moment of  
orgasm bottle-head  
for the one resting  
the thrust hurts I'm dry

will the tears smudge my  
shadow smile unreally  
like a climber at  
the peak and God I'm  
enjoying acting  
the act for him in  
love which eye is I



# THE NASH CIRCUIT

M. JOHN  
HARRISON

## 1: ALBERT IS LOST.

"I don't like this."

Roget gazed out of the sash window on to Anson Road N, his shoulder muscles shifting nervously under his clerical grey John Collier suit.

"You could have done it without me. Christ, what a mess. And in bloody broad daylight, too!"

The conversation had palled. Jerry Cornelius turned up the volume of the B&O recorder, which was playing Roy Harper's *China Girl*, taped live. The room was filled with crashing chords. Roget snarled, darted forward with a disgusted expression on his beaky face and turned it down again. Broken blood vessels pulsed in his caved cheeks. He was trembling.

"For Christ's sake!"

Jerry laughed "Worried about the neighbours, old man?"

"You bastard," said Roget.

"You could leave," offered Jerry, "if it's too much for you -"

Roget flinched. He shrugged and walked quickly out of the room, avoiding the electrical gear spread out in the middle of the carpet. The front door slammed.

Jerry lay back on the bed and laughed until tears were squeezed from the corners of his eyes.

He drank some more whisky, went to the window, and had a last look at the room opposite his. Thin black tendrils of oily smoke issued from it, carrying an appetising scent of roasted pork. He wouldn't be seeing the burning prime-minister again. Thinking of Roget, he sniggered helplessly. Plump Irish Catholic girls were exercising in the warm summer air as he took his heater from the window sill and dropped it into its cradle under his arm. They all wore white-rimmed sun glasses and two piece suits from the late fifties and in some obscure way reminded him of Jackie Kennedy before she did wrong. They seemed quite undisturbed by the smoke and the cries of pain, dreaming, perhaps, of pints of Guinness and Val Doonican melodies.

Jerry wound the tape on to the beginning of *One For Everyone*, and stopped it. He shunted power into the electric mandala on the Axminster, stacked the whisky

bottle under the sink with the others, and went over to the cheval glass to smile at himself and adjust the flies of his white nylon ciré jump suit.

Down below, one of the biddies was staring up at the smoke, looking puzzled. Perhaps Roget was right, and the apathy hadn't progressed far enough. Jerry stuck his head out of the window and said waspishly: "Avoid Greeks. It could happen, even to you." Then he pulled the sash down, picked up his hardshell guitar case and switched the B&O back on at full volume. Modal triplets writhed about in front of a solid, driving rhythm.

Jerry stepped into the Shifter.

The room vanished abruptly and the air chilled. Harper's modes opened gates in his head and Time flooded in, danced, shedding tourmalines and giant enamelled dragonflies.

"Needs you," intoned a precise hollow voice, "needs you. Baa. Baa baa."

"You don't mean that," said Jerry.

A cold wind fingered him. His feet crushed ancient wasp-husks. He stood in a succession of vacant, faded rooms that smelled of glycol, horse hair, then mint, watching his suit change colour rapidly. He looked out over igneous plains, then at a Roman sundial isolated in a single ray of watery light in a sunken garden. Craneflies buzzed from beneath his feet.

He shot through into the target era and stepped out of the Shift field into a swampy glade among viridescent cycads and conifers. The sun was at zenith and very bright.

He wasn't quite sure of his position: it was early on in the cycle, Tertiary or Mesozoic judging by the humidity and the smell of rotting vegetation. Beyond the dense growth of giant tree ferns he made out a tall white tower, about which orbited a pair of pterodactyls. The decadent line of its architecture — it was five-sided, terraced and fluted — placed him more definitely in the later Mesozoic. It was close enough; there was always an element of luck in these things.

He put on his dark glasses, lit a De Reszke and set off north east at a brisk walk, looking for the Shifter relay. There was an element of luck in that, too.

About half way across the clearing he noticed a commotion in the undergrowth. You couldn't be too



*He was dressed in baggy fawn trousers, a woolly pullover and carpet slippers . . .*

careful about saurians. He dropped the hardshell and took out his heater. Several small furry mammals skittered out into the open, blinking red eyes in the direct sunlight. Their tiny thumbs were opposable. Jerry smiled down indulgently.

After them shuffled a stooped old Jew. He was dressed in baggy fawn trousers, a woolly pullover and carpet slippers, and the white hair billowing back from his high forehead gave his drooping features an air of comic distinction. There was breakfast egg on his jumper, Mesozoic loam on his slippers, and his eyes were mildly worried. He was biting his thumbnail.

Jerry's smile broadened and he put the heater away.

"I wonder if you . . . I seem to be lost . . ." The mild eyes moved from Jerry to the tree-ferns to the romping pterosaurs.

"Oh, come now Albert," Jerry admonished. "Remember:

$$t' = \beta(t - \frac{vx}{c^2}) \text{ where } \beta = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{v^2}{c^2}}}$$

Albert shook his head. "Did I get that far? It doesn't seem to relate here. And I suppose you think it's a bit dated now —"

He fingered his moustache.

"You wouldn't have a pencil and a bit of graph paper?"

"Do it in your head as we go. Would Tierra del Fuego 1971 suit you?"

"It's all the same to me." He indicated the hardshell.

"Are you an entertainer, young man?"

Jerry picked up the case and began to walk quite quickly. A large swift shadow whipped briefly across the glade.

"After a manner of speaking," he said. It was a carnivore's universe, he decided, as the shadow returned with a dry clack of leather wings.

"You know," panted Albert, as they began to run, their feet sinking deep into the soft earth, "those Lorenz transformations have the most fascinating possibilities."

"Depends on your inertial frame," said Jerry, unimpressed. "And anyway, it's been done before."

The air shimmered in front of them, whispering. As they broke through the relay, Jerry shivered. It could have been the temperature differential, or a premonition. He hoped it wasn't his old hypothermia recurring.

The hunting pterosaur followed them through, cut the cooling air above them, its slipstream wrapping Jerry's hair about his face.

Lacking a sense of its own identity, it dissolved into a cloud of yellow bubbles, groaning mournfully.

## 2: A CASE OF PHOTOPHOBIA.

Jerry's permanently booked room at the Lucky Golden Albatross had a good view of Ushuaia. Albert stood looking at the steep glaciated hillsides and clumps of olive vegetation while Jerry changed his jump suit for black knuckle cord hipsters, a pink lacy shirt, a purple cravat and half calf boots in beige suede. Low cloud roiled round the summits of Darwin and Larmointo. The central heating had failed. Occasionally Albert scribbled minutely on the back of a month old copy of *Womans Own*, manipulating Jerry's ten inch BRL with his free hand.

Jerry cooked up some stuff over his gas lighter and rolled himself a fat cigarette. After a couple of puffs he felt better, put on his leather trench coat and went out to examine the action. The cold streets were full of bunting, Flags Of All Nations cracking in the grey wind. Red neon robbed them of colour although it was not yet evening. At the telegraph office the clerk gave him half a dozen cables. The only one he could make any sense of read:

+TASA121 P STA45 PDF MILFORD

PENN 19 7 1120AM VIA WUI

=JEREMIAH CORNELIUS USHUAIA PR=

JERRY THE ENTROPY IS UP STOP ENCORE STOP

WHERE IS SHAKEY MO STOP LOVE=CASE=

It shouldn't be too difficult to decode. He went to one of the older bars, but it was a drab place, empty, and it did nothing to warm him up. A handful of the native population, pathetic halfbreeds caught between culture gradients, sat about drinking Vat 69 and not saying much. Only the tourists drank pisco. Somebody had kicked in the fascia of the juke box; there was still a certain amount of resistance to Time.

"Why the flags?" he asked the barman.

"You want another pisco?" The man's face was pocked and blank. One of the natives left his table unsteadily, threw his arm round Jerry's shoulders. He leered.

"You buy me a drink. Or," he thought for a moment,

"I roll you, pretty man."

"Piss off," said Jerry.

He needed some bright light music, and most of all some people to leech, so he went back to the Albatross to fetch Albert, and they made it to The Grand Park Lucky Casino And Bar-Grill.

There, last year's music was playing in nostalgic Vegas surroundings — plush and plastic with lightshow murals — and the fruit machines were alive with beautiful acid greens and glowing oranges and imperial purples. Ivy League laughter drifted from the crap tables; now and then a plump loser drifted out the door, looking pained and smashed. It wasn't home, but it would do. Muted Davy Graham jumped about in his brain as he clucked up bunches of grapes and lines of yellow bells and bought lots to drink with jackpot tokens while Albert calculated odds. He began to perk up.

Like all good machines they were fixed, so it got to be a bit of a bore. Jerry left Albert with the pretty lights, ate a polypropylene steak in the Grill Room and wound up in the Lucky Numbers Doubles Bar. There was a good deal of bunting strewn about, the Union Jack predominating, and a placard that said:

**A COMPLETELY FREE LUCKY DOUBLES  
SERVICE!! DRINK WITH UK PRIME MINISTER  
CRICHTON—CLERK DURING HIS OFFICIAL  
VISIT!!**

Crichton-Clerk occupied a table near the bar. He wore a natty Italian suit in powder blue silk and was flanked by two policemen in black tunics and breeches. All three of them wore dark glasses. Facing him across the table was a small dark-haired girl in a mauve lurex trouser suit. She had her hands under the table most of the time, her elbows moving rhythmically. Jerry couldn't see much of her but her back looked nice.

Clerk's bony yellow fingers rested limply on the formica in front of a raspberry cordial, weighed down by gold signet rings with Masonic emblems. Pomade glistened on his tightly waved black hair. He laughed a lot, showing more gold. Nobody seemed to be drinking with him. He made Jerry feel ill.

As he ordered his pisco, their shades turned toward his voice like blind animals. Reflected neon transfixed him. His hands went clammy and he began to shiver: so much blatant anachronism sucked all the juice from him. Crichton-Clerk leaned forward, said something to the girl. She laughed, putting plenty of belly into it. Bitch, thought Jerry. Nausea made him sweat. He heard Jerry Cornelius moaning softly somewhere as he tore himself off the spikes of light. He heaved. It was all so Medieval.

He drank the pisco quickly and put some of his winnings on the bar top. The barman pointed silently to the placard, made an orderly pile of the tokens and pushed them back to him. He felt his identity going, too.

"All in all," he got out through clicking teeth, "I think I'd rather pay."

The shades fixed him again, heliographing bitterly. Cold came in waves, but at least he'd picked up on who he was. He threw some more tokens on the bright little heap.

"In fact you might give the PM some more fruit cocktail, on me."

It was time he did something about the schizophrenia. Perhaps a visit to the Pope, something to take his mind



*His hands went clammy and he began to shiver . . .*

off things.

One of the policemen touched his shoulder. Caught out, Jerry saw small horrific visions of himself duplicated and reduplicated in all the sunglasses in the universe. He chewed his underlip.

"Mr. Crichton-Clerk would like a word Claude."

"I don't believe it. Christ, what an imagination!"

The grip on his shoulder tightened. He dragged his heater out snappily and wiped the policemen's cheeks with its barrel; crunched the dark glasses underfoot and stuck his fingers in the surprised blue eyes revealed; feeling sprightly, walked over to the prime minister.

"Cornelius, you'll never learn which side's got the jam on it."

"At least I'm not one of the raspberries, Spinetti."

Jerry eyed the girl covertly. Her face was nicer than her back. She winked at him, and he fancied her.

"You're a loser, though, Jerry. You miss the point."

"There isn't any. Not to politics, it's a dead medium. And as for crime . . . You're just another saurian. You're only fucking yourself, Antonio."

"Ho ho ho. Splendid!"

It wasn't helping. Clerk was keeping his cool, and that made Jerry sicker by the minute. The room began

to revolve. It wasn't fair. Yelling "Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!", he ran out of the place, struggling to get the heater back in its cradle. The last thing he saw there was the girl, turning her head to giggle at him.

He felt a bit of a silly.

Down among the fruit machines, Albert was standing knee deep in a growing heap of tokens. He had abandoned the slide rule and was smiling benignly round at his crowd of admirers.

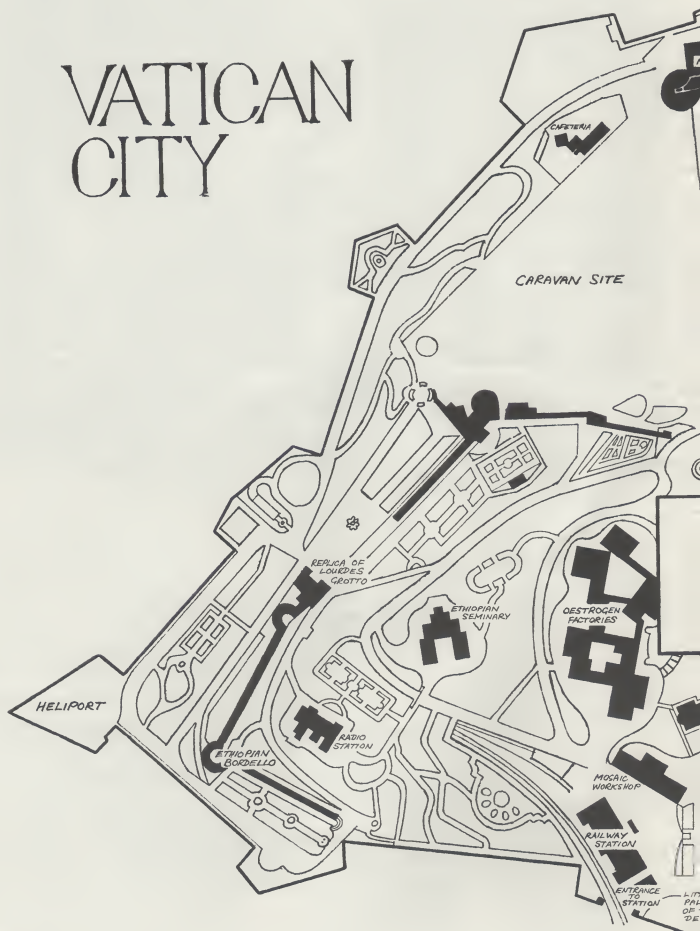
"So *shit!*" shrieked Jerry.

### 3: THE ARSONIST.

God's Church On Earth was falling apart. The Vatican City, its chapels streaked with grime from nearby fertiliser plants and oestrogen factories, was full of waste paper drifting on a cold wind. Jerry stood in a draughty doorway on the Belvedere Courtyard, shivering in his slashed and padded doublet and pale green tights as he waited for Hoonihan. He was chilly down to his boot zips, but quite cheerful. Northing perked him up so much as Time in action.

Across the square near the fire station a party of pilgrims had fallen out, struggling among their *Volkswagen*

# VATICAN CITY







buses, rolling about, the grey faded dumpy women screaming at one another in guttural Ulster accents. There was hardly any blood and the affair was a bit desultory: even the middle classes were underfed.

The trouble, Jerry thought, wasn't so much speculation against the Catholic Dollar as lack of confidence: you wouldn't go on pruning the Calendar Of Saints indefinitely without losing coherence. If anything, the backdated excommunication of Saint Christopher had been a hotter brick than the birth control lobby. The fragmentation was getting steadily faster, with Jeanne d'Arc and Francis of Assissi falling and Peter shaky. Splinter factions were praying for devaluation and with the failure of his economic war against the Turks Paul VII had lost control of the Jesuits. It was a pretty muddle.

Hoonihan came out from under a florid arch, his robes flapping in the wind. His face was pale and he'd lost of lot of weight.

"Hello, Cardinal," said Jerry, kissing the frail old hand. "There seems to be a dispute among the faithful. How's the old order?"

"No better for your absence, Jeremiah. You wouldn't consider -"

"That's heresy, Cardinal. I'm on the other side now."

"I suppose you are."

They went into a library which had once looked very smart, with purple drapes, gold tooled copies of the *Paschala Mysteriori* and rare escritoirs. Now, all that was obscured by tottering piles of more modern books, paperbacks for the most part, their spines ratty, their pages falling out. The cardinal walked through clouds of dust, coughing dryly.

"An offshoot of the *Index Purgatorius*," he explained.

"We're banning more books now than we can handle in

the vaults. We still have your stuff here -" pointing to a couple of copies of *Time Search Through The Declining West* "—I like to leaf through them now and then, for sentiment's sake."

"It's all a bit dated. Perhaps if you hadn't purged them, I'd have . . . How's himself?"

"Oh, not good. The crusade took it out of Him and He can't handle the internal politics. I'm afraid He won't see you at the moment. He's reading the latest additions to the index."

"That's all right. I'll leave a message."

Hoonihan scabbled among the books until he found a ball point and some sheets of vellum.

"It's all we can manage with the paper shortage. We're going back to all the old ways. The thermo-electrics went off yesterday."

"You can't avoid progress."

Jerry wrote the first two words that came into his head on one of the larger sheets and initialled it flamboyantly.

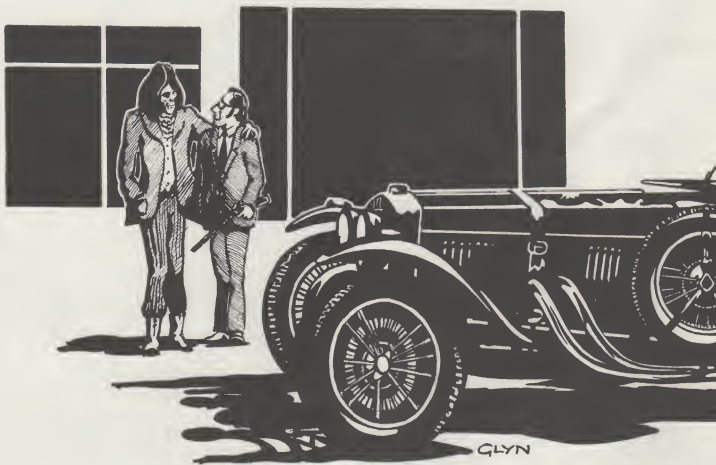
"I've just come from Crichton-Clerk," he said, as he handed it over.

"Ah, there's a streak of the Devil in that Angelo. But he's a good heart, a good heart. Like yourself in many ways, impatient."

"Not impatience, Cardinal. We merely live at different speeds."

Hoonihan frowned paternally and went out, clutching the vellum. His coughing fit had left him trembling. He seemed to have difficulty in getting about. His slow footsteps echoed along the corridor, stopped quite close. A door creaked twice. There was a silence. Jerry blew the dust off his books.

Paul VII began to scream.



Hoonihan's voice rose above the thin old wall. Somebody was throwing furniture about.

Jerry smiled, smoothed back the hair over his ears. He tore some pages dealing with relativity from *Time Search*, set fire to them and scattered them about. The paperback Darwins and Hoyles burned well, crackling. He got warm very quickly. On his way out he paused, his lips peeling back off his teeth, to listen to the cries. It was a pity the fire brigade was so close; but then you couldn't have it all.

By the time he reached his hidden device in the Sistine Chapel, the sirens were whining morosely. He Shifted to the strains of the Sanctus.

#### 4: AT THE "SWISS GRILL."

Jerry came laughing down the Great North, his tape machine turned up loud to combat the whine and clatter of the chain-driven Frazer Nash. He loved the old marques. The slipstream whipped at his silky hair, and he was filled with energy. He shot through the deserted, stinking streets of Barnet, the car juddering on its quarter-elliptics, his gear changes batting back from vacant terraces; came up against a Shell tanker abandoned and burning fitfully across the main drag; detoured along Barnet Lane and Totteridge because he liked the greenery. Packs of thin children roamed the South Herts golf course, hoping to catch a juicy dog. It was going to be a good summer. The smell was bad in Finchley, worse in Archway.

It began to rain as he left the Holloway Road by the demolished hospital and made it via back streets to Haverstock Hill, where nothing much had changed. At the Swiss Grill a plump waitress gave him rabbit omelette and chips. He sat by the French windows, pleased by the anachronism of the small paved court outside. Rain dripped through cherry blossom on to grotesque stone boys and dolphins. Beyond the cherry trees, the tennis courts were free of rubbish, the nets in good shape.

"You can't evade the issue for ever, though," he warned the girl as she brought him the tomato sauce.

"Oh, we like to keep the place nice, sir," she said. "We seem to have missed the worst here, if you see what I mean."

Shakey Mo Collier came in halfway through the ice

cream, carrying his Sten at a cocky angle. He had a thin, birdlike face, predatory nose and bad teeth. His Burton heather-mixture suit was spotless, his white collar a bit greasy. He was probably the best bomber in four counties, a cast iron professional. He had worked for Jerry before, on the early vault jobs, along with Smiles the linen-banker.

"Nice to see you again, Mr. C.," he said sourly, sitting down gingerly and keeping hold of the Sten. He didn't seem to find it a pleasure at all, but that was just his way. He took out a packet of glucose tablets and ate a few.

"Expecting trouble, Shakey Mo?"

"Nah. But you can't be too careful." He ran a hand through his hair, which was oiled, swept back and worn at the collar. "Little buggers, they got no morals."

"The situation's bad?"

"What can you expect? I'm sympathetic, but you got to stay alive. It's a duty to yourself."

Jerry finished the ice-cream and drank his Coke. He rolled a joint, offered it to Collier, who shook his head.

"How do you feel about working, Mo?"

"That would depend on the percentage, Mr. C." Collier grinned stagily, but his voice was no less surly.

"You won't want money, of course."

"Nah. I'm building a big one. Got any plutonium?"

"I can fix it, I think." Jerry thought a minute.

"Yes, I can fix some of that. I can't guarantee high quality stuff, though."

"Don't you worry about that, Mr. C., I can handle that."

"Right then, I'll be in touch."

"Right then."

They shook hands solemnly. Shakey Mo was one of the old school.

Jerry gave the waitress a fistful of high denomination notes. She took the money to the check out, then had to root for change. While she was behind the counter, a party of children came in.

None of them was over eight years old. They were pinched-looking but quite clean, and they had very white teeth. Jerry couldn't tell which sex they were. Their carved-out faces were high in the cheekbone and curiously luminous of eye. They wore denim jeans and jackets, long hair, and they carried cunningly constructed zip-guns.

The nice waitress looked up, started, and brought a cut down ten-bore from under the till.

"Fuck orf!" she shouted. "Clear aht before I blow yer arses orf!"

Jerry was overcome. The shift of emphasis was producing some beautiful things. He felt a glow of satisfaction. He drew his heater.

One of the children stepped forward and said gently, "We . . ."

"Would . . ." supplied another, moving up to flank him.

"Like . . ." murmured a third.

"Something. . ."

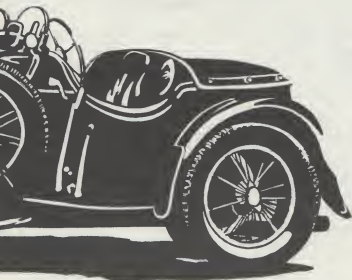
"To . . ."

" . . . Eat."

#### 5: A DATE WITH PENELOPE.

June 4, 1965.

"What are you going to do now?" asked Penelope Crichton-Clerk. It was almost dark. The eight radial arrows



on the face of the wall clock glowed softly. They were barely moving. Worry, worry, worry.

July 27, 1945.

"It's going critical, without a doubt," said Jerry.

They lay across the big brass bed in his Nash Crescent house. Roy Harper was singing Dylan's *Girl From The North Country*. A draught from the open window fluttered the leaves of the calendars that stood on every flat surface. Two beautiful salukis were curled up at the foot of the bed.

April 21, 1971.

It was her uncle's infatuation with facsimiles that lay at the root of the trouble, as far as Jerry could see: it definitely constituted an attempt to peg the status quo. There was probably only one way to deal with him.

February 1, 1919.

July 26, 1945.

"You might . . ."

" . . . kill him, yes. But he has the images. I need them first. The darkness . . ."

"You don't need to be frightened of Uncle Luigi, Jerry."

December 20, 1932.

"Fear? You can't see . . . It all went wrong in the fifties. Something . . . slipped. It wasn't meant to go that way at all." He looked into her young face, feeling older than he had a right to be. She smiled uncertainly. He ground out his big cigarette and had a drink of wine. Outside, he heard the wild animals collecting in the park. He shivered. Some days you couldn't even gain it on the roundabouts.

August 15, 1923.

"I don't know what to do for you."

"You might . . ."

"What?"

"Fuck it, I feel so exposed!"

October 18, 1965.

Mainly, she didn't understand. It had all happened before her time. And now the arrows on the clock were moving even slower. He rolled off the bed and paced about the room. The dogs got to their feet and came to heel. It was past time to do something, and his hair needed washing. He went back to the bed.

May 13, 1969.

"You did look funny running out of that bar," she giggled. She rubbed her smooth skin against him.

"Ho ho," he said.

She was nice and plump and fresh and he supposed he liked her. He tickled her navel, she patted his bottom. They had a lovely time.

## 6: ELIPHAS LEVI & MADAME TUSSAUD.

Somebody had switched on the Battle of Trafalgar: lights flashed irregularly, cannon roared, and the sea heaved. Above the *mélée* rose the sound of drums and stirring nautical melodies. Far off, from the deathbed section, Nelson mumbled to Hardy. Rigging collapsed noisily.

The floorwalkers of Madame Tussaud's wore dark worsted suits and suede shoes. They had seen it all before, but they were still disturbed. Some of them tried to hide, their conternated faces vanishing behind the souvenir counter, broken spectacles flying this way and that.

It was going to be a soft touch.

Jerry Cornelius was enjoying himself no end. Dressed

in a crushed velvet frock coat and mazarine hipsters, his hair awry in the wind that rushed through the exploded street doors, he moved steadily across the entrance lobby toward the main staircase. Low-yield Californium shells from his special pistol burst among the floorwalkers with sharp ugly reports, setting things on fire. He could see they weren't too happy with the weapon and, to tell the truth, he wasn't either — it wasn't meant to be fired in such a confined space, and he was forced to check his wrist Geiger frequently to make sure he hadn't picked up a dose.

Shakey Mo Collier was sniping from the bridge of the *Victory*, battle flags flying above him. As life and drum struck up *Rule Britannia* he took out the last of the worsted suits, and the staircase was theirs. They went up it three steps at a time. The possibilities were multiplying.

A strong detachment of attendants wearing Tussaud livery met them at the entrance of the Grand Hall. They were carrying mean machine pistols, but they didn't appear over-confident. Jerry's face seemed to upset them in some way.

He laughed loudly, waved the special gun at them and hauled out his heater. He began firing both guns haphazardly, crowing when he hit something. Shakey Mo's chopper rattled behind him, stinking of that good old fashioned cordite. His hair fell into his eyes. Looking flustered, the opposition retreated among the political exhibits. Jerry went after them, shrieking, slipping in pools of blood. He chuckled the empty reaction pistol away and took cover behind Winston Churchill. He turned on his tape machine, and weird bottleneck guitar music jangled over the noise of the guns.

A stray shell decapitated Winston. His molten head bounced over the parquet floor, losing its identity. After that, it was every man for himself as Jerry howled and sniggered and snapped his fingers and swung the heater in a wild semicircle.

He melted HRH Queen Elizabeth II. The arrows on his watch began to fairly whirl round. He melted HRH Prince Philip, Duke Of Edinburgh; HRH Princess Margaret, Countess Of Snowdon; the Earl Of Snowdon; HRH Duchess Of Kent; HRH Duke Of Kent. He melted Fidel Castro, he melted Colonel John H Glenn and Robert Kennedy and Chou En-Lai. He sawed the head off Pope John XXIII and Paul VI, the legs off Richard Nixon. He melted the Royal Corgis. He cut Mr. Kosygin in half. He liked a good joke.

After a bit, Shakey Mo restrained him gently, said "Later, Mr. C.," and off they went again, up to the hidden workshops, past the Hall of Kings and Halls of Tableaux. A scent of burning beeswax followed them.

Collier blew the combination lock off the steel door of the modelling studio. Scattered about a long, well-lit room were easels, gobs of fine wax, and bald, incomplete heads with vacant eyes. Sculpting tools, both sharp and blunt, lay on short benches. The walls were painted alice-blue. In a black dentist's chair on a low dais sat Albert, his pullover rumpled. He was strapped down and confronting him on a kind of last was his own face, scored roughly from a shapeless lump of clay. He looked shaken up and pretty puzzled.

"Now *here's* a boost!" cried Jerry, rushing over to undo the straps. He broke a fingernail but it was worth it. Albert's eyes were drained.

"I can't get out of my . . . head," he muttered.

He noticed Jerry, reached up to touch the lapels



Outside, he heard the wild animals collecting . . .

on the frock coat. "You've spilt something nasty on that, young man . . ." His head lolled back. Jerry decided it might be best to move him out before catatonia set in. It was lucky they'd only got as far as making a preliminary model of the old boy: he was far too disorientated to resist the full treatment. Crichton-Clerk had probably used the gambling machines as his vector.

He turned his heater on the partly-formed image. The clay baked, fractured grotesquely down the middle and fell to bits.

Albert brightened up rapidly.

With various electrical components from his pockets. Jerry rigged a standby Shifter. He plugged it into a wall fixture and waited for it to warm up so he could synch it with the tape machine. A faint shimmer was in the air. Shakey Mo frowned nervously, tapping the skeletal butt of the Sten; he didn't like messing about. Things were doing nicely, with Harper's *Forever* on the deck and the tuning almost finished, when some of Clerk's police came in, strip light flaring off their shades in diagonal bars and glinting on their uncouth Colts.

For a moment it was all go. Jerry got the first two with a long lateral slice of the heater beam that set the doorposts on fire. Bullets whizzed about his ears. *Yackety yackety* yack went Mo's machine gun. Heads were splitting right and left. Albert trod on a piece of his broken effigy and fell into the Shifter, which was to deliver him to the Nash Crescent place.

Jerry began to feel unsure of himself as the smoke cleared. Crichton-Clerk lounged in the doorway, his smile

wider and toothier than ever.

"Hello," said Jerry. He thought of his gun, but couldn't make his mind up. "This place is a caution, Mario. The old hair and fingernails game. Eliphas Levi would love it."

"You can be too subtle, Cornelius."

"Or you can flog dead horses. That's your trip, not mine."

"If there were less of your kind about, we could get down to administrating the country the way people want it. They want it cleared up, you know. They need stability. You kind of myth woundn't impress the Dagenham shop-stewards, Cornelius. They need a new deal."

Jerry felt ill again.

"Do you have to con yourself, too?" he asked. He raised the heater. "You've got something of mine. I think I'd like it back."

Clerk shook his head sadly. He was peering down the corridor. His smile returned, almost shy.

"I hardly think you'll want them."

"Oh, I do."

"Not that I'm refusing . . ." He shrugged.

Three tall young men walked in. They wore identical velvet frock coats and mazarine hipsters, and their fine black hair brushed their narrow shoulders. Waxen-faced, they clicked and whirled as they moved; but on the whole, they put on a convincing show.

"That's your trip, not mine," they said, in poor unison.

"Jerry Cornelius! Jerry Cornelius!" shouted Jerry. He screamed. They screamed. They were him. His power



GLYN

*Jerry Cornelius! Jerry Cornelius! . . .*

leaked away into them. He threw up. It was the fingernail ploy all right.

"Get me out!" they pleaded.

Jerry knelt, whimpering.

"Mo, for Christ's sake!" they appealed, their features rigid.

Jerry got one foot under him, raised his heavy head. He shot himself. The machine gun clattered somewhere off to his left and he collapsed, his legs still making stiff walking motions. From the hard floor he fired again. He burst into flames and his bones melted. Nonsense came out of the loudspeakers in his chest. Sparks fizzed and danced about his liquid face. He stood over his shaking body and said "Help-help-help!" The Sten, very close, hurt his ears.

He lay on the parquet, tangled up with a pair of metal legs. He was sweating and cold. The hypothermia was getting worse by the minute. He stayed down for some time, listening to the flames and sound of Mo Collier's boots thudding along the passage outside. There was some scrambled shouting a long way off, an exchange of shots.

Mo came back, beating a way through the burning golems and said dejectedly: "He got away, I Mr.C. Chopper on the roof. A piddly little CZAL. I run out of bullets."

"Oh well," said Jerry. "You'll have to carry me, actually."

## 7: TIME IS SHORT

The smell was really bad now, drifting in hot waves over the city from centres of infection in Finsbury Park and Notting Hill, King's Cross and Shepherd's Bush. The big-eyed children walked the streets openly, fighting guerilla engagements with groups of Crichton-Clerk's automata.

Jerry was in a sombre mood as he carried Penelope to the bed: he hadn't hit her very hard, but he wasn't sure their relationship could stand it. The bruised area under her left breast was purple and yellow. She sprawled whitely against the crimson sheets, all the fun gone out of her. In the silent room her breath was lost. Calendars rippled gently in the thick air, and the face of the wall clock was inert.

He poured himself a Glen Grant and drank it morosely, glancing through the mail. There was nothing of real interest — some stuff from Case, a postcard from Leeds confirming his plutonium deal, an air letter from Pope Hoonihan. He put on some music — Mississippi Fred McDowell, bottling *My Babe* — but couldn't get interested.

It looked as if Albert had been caught up in the doublecross: he wasn't anywhere about.

Jerry emptied a tumbler of whisky between Penny's blue lips, noting with a shudder the vacancy lent to her face by the slack mouth. She stirred and spluttered and moved her limbs about like an insect on its back. He splashed the rest of his own drink on her thighs and belly and bent down to lick it off. After a while, she giggled and reached down to wind her fingers gently in his hair. He slapped her hand away, stood up and took the small ornate syringe from its jeweller's case on the bedside table.

"July 26 1945," he said to her. "And this time I want the full story."

There wasn't much time left, even though the clock had stopped.

## 8: A TRIP TO THE ZOO.

It was a sunny afternoon at the zoo. Seals honked from their pool, throwing up iridescent droplets of spray as they dived for imitation polythene fish; the elephants stalked ponderously and obsessively round and round their moated

compound; agile goats hopped over the imported sandstone crags above the bearpits. Irish girls were everywhere with their USAF escorts, determined to enjoy themselves despite the smell. They chattered in pleasant North London brogue, pretending that nothing had changed, their print dresses flapping about their calves, box-Brownies dangling from their capable hands. In the packed refreshment room opposite the grizzly pit, they pawed the plate glass windows, pointing out the antics of the animals.

Shakey Mo Collier, wearing the blue uniform of a keeper, squatted in the mouth of a small dark cave, gazing down at the visitors parading slowly past the bears. He had his handkerchief clapped to his nose: up on the heights, the wind from Tufnell Park was strong, bearing an overpowering reek.

"This is a bad do, Mr. C.," he complained, his voice muffled. "There's too many of them about."

Jerry made some adjustments to the tape machine, which was playing Roy Harper's *China Girl*, recorded live.

"They'll hear us, Mr. C!"

"You can go if you want," said Jerry indifferently. He stopped fiddling with the recorder, got out his gun and clipped on its lightweight target stock. "I don't need you any more."

Collier looked hurt. His silhouette vanished. Jerry heard his boots crunching on the steps outside. He shrugged, wound the tape on to the beginning of *One for Everyone*, and stopped it. Then he hefted the heater and, grinning smugly, crawled to the entrance. He was well fixed-up. He got goat-gung on his pale green silk jump suit.

In the refreshment room, Crichton-Clerk was at the autograph stage. As he signed with a flourish, the sun caught his teeth. They flashed Sicilian gold. Patches of sweat had formed under the armpits of his tropical suit. He was standing at the end of the self-service counter, by the checkout. With each little plastic tray of food, the management presented a complimentary autograph book. His policemen were marshalling an orderly goodwill demonstration by visiting Ukrainian students. Banners displayed his statesmanly quotes. The biddies filed past him quietly, eyes turned down, books coyly open. The books had pink pages.

Jerry sniggered.

He cuddled the stock of the heater and aimed at Clerk's groin.

The PM looked up to smile at the winking, clicking lenses of the box-Brownies. He saw the flash of chrome as Jerry settled his gun more comfortably. His mouth opened and shut silently, like a carp's. Lagging, his cry came to Jerry's ears.

The heater fizzed.

"And that's *you* fucked, Vittorio," Jerry murmured unkindly.

Clerk ignited and was soon burning steadily. He rolled and writhed across the floor. Screams and guttural shouts echoed across the sunny zoo as the crowd in the restaurant tried to leave. The policemen fired into it, hot for the assassin. The goodwill demonstration guttered, its banners blazing. Jerry dismantled the gun, holstered it, and switched the tape machine back on at full volume. Modal triplets filled the cave. Nothing changes much, he thought. Bullets whined off the rock face outside. He stepped into the Shifter.

Chilled air plucked at his clothes. The cave was filled with enormous purple bats: it contracted like a womb and began to phase rhythmically in and out of Time.

"Needs you," piped the bats.

He shot through into the target era and stepped out of the Shift field into a swampy glade among giant tree-ferns and conifers. He wasn't sure of his position - - it was early on in the cycle, judging by the vegetation. Beyond the fern forest rose a tall obsidian tower, three-sided and fluted, about which orbited a pair of pterodactyls. That located him more precisely in the later Mesozoic. It was quite close, considering the way his luck had been.

running. He lit a De Reszke and set off south at a brisk trot. About halfway across the glade he noticed a commotion in the undergrowth. You couldn't be too careful about saurians. He drew the heater. Several small furry mammals skittered out into the open, blinking red eyes in the direct sunlight. Their tiny thumbs were opposable. Jerry smiled down indulgently.

After them shuffled a stooped old Jew. He was dressed in baggy fawn trousers, a woolly pullover and carpet slippers, and the white hair billowing back from his forehead gave his drooping features an air of comic distinction. There was breakfast egg on his jumper, Mesozoic loam on his slippers and his eyes were mildly worried. He was biting his thumbnail.

Jerry's smile broadened and he put the heater away.



## N E X T M O N T H

### A PLACE AND A TIME TO DIE

by J.G. Ballard

### THE INCOMPLETE SCIENCE

A look at economics

by B.J. Bayley

Plus Maxim Jakubowski  
Langdon Jones & more.

# THE ENTROPIC GANG BANG CAPER

norman spinrad

## PBA THREATENS STRIKE OVER DEMONSTRATION TACTICS

New York, N.Y. The President of the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association threatened to call a general police strike unless all riot police were immediately disarmed. "Armed police have a tough time getting laid at demonstrations," he explained. "It's bad for morale."

### *The Arsenal of Entropy*

Some common human phobias include fear of close spaces, fear of heights, fear of spiders, fear of suffocation, fear of dogs, fear of injury to the eyes, fear of rats, fear of faces, fear of insects, fear of slime, fear of injury to faeces, fear of insects, fear of slime, fear of injury to the genitals, fear of buggery, fear of impotence, fear of a public display of cowardice.

### Scenario One:

*War is any means of breaking the will of the enemy. Violence is a means of waging war. A violence-war breaks the will of the enemy through fear. In a violence-war, the enemy is defeated when his fear of further violence is greater than his fear of the consequences of defeat.*

VIOLENCE IS THE LAST RESORT OF DESPERATE  
MEN ARE THE LAST RESORT OF VIOLENCE IS  
DESPERATE RESORT OF THE LAST MEN

### *The Arsenal of Entropy*

DMSO is a chemical which when combined with a wide spectrum of liquids will cause the liquid with which it is mixed to be absorbed into the bloodstream through skin-contact.

Spray-guns may be purchased on the open market. LSD is a colorless, odorless, tasteless liquid which may be introduced into any fluid medium without fear of detection.

### Scenario Two:

*War is any means of breaking the will of the enemy. Revulsion is a means of waging war. A revulsion-war breaks the will of the enemy through disgust. In a revulsion-war, the enemy is defeated when his disgust for further conflict is greater than his fear of the consequences of defeat.*

## WAR NEGOTIATIONS SUSPENDED

Miami Beach, Fla. Negotiations were suspended until next Friday today between the Pentagon and the Military Association of Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen over the unresolved issue of combat coffee-breaks. Although MASSA has accepted the Pentagon proposal of a \$2.25 an hour wage-increase for enlisted men, to be spread out over the duration of the next three-year contract, MASSA spokesmen indicated that the Pentagon refusal to grant combat coffee-breaks could lead to an indefinite prolongation of the current strike.

Regular coffee-breaks have been standard procedure in most other industries for years, MASSA negotiators pointed out, in refusing the Pentagon's counter-proposal of double-time for night patrols.

REVOLUTION IS THE OPIUM OF THE INTELLECTUAL  
CLASS IS THE OPIUM REVOLUTION IS INTELLECTUAL  
OPIUM IS THE CLASS REVOLUTION OF THE  
INTELLECTUAL CLASS OPIUM IS THE REVOLUTION

### Scenario Three:

*War is any means of breaking the will of the enemy. Sour grapes is a means of waging war. A sour-grapes-war breaks the will of the enemy through envy. In a sour-grapes-war, the enemy is defeated when his envy of the pleasures enjoyed by the opponent is greater than his fear of the consequences of defeat.*

### *The Arsenal of Entropy*

Many men (including police, public officials and military personnel) strongly relish the prospect of sexual intercourse with young, nubile, willing, attractive women. They have been known to abandon more onerous tasks when confronted with the immediate prospect of a good lay. Other men (including police, public officials and military personnel) experience an equivalent reaction at the prospect of sexual congress with young, nubile, willing, attractive men. A small minority of men (including police, public officials, and military personnel) have a similar lust for sexual objects such as dogs, goats, or dirty sweatsocks. Science has discovered few men in whom a sexual desire cannot be provoked.

YOU CAN NEVER FIND A COP WHEN YOU NEED  
ONE COP A NEED WHEN YOU FIND ONE COP NEVER  
NEED A COP CAN NEVER FIND YOU WHEN YOU  
NEED YOU CAN NEVER FIND A NEED WHEN YOU  
COP ONE

#### Scenario Four:

*War is any means of breaking the will of the enemy. Lust is a means of waging war. A lust-war breaks the will of the enemy through tantalization. In a lust-war, the enemy is defeated when his sexual lust for the enemy is greater than his fear of the consequences of defeat.*

#### SCOTUS RULES ON CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE

Washington, D.C. The Supreme Court, in a unanimous decision today, declared the Constitution Unconstitutional. "There is no provision whatsoever in the Constitution for the Constitution," the Court decision pointed out.

#### *The Arsenal of Entropy*

Many human beings experience a violent disgust-reaction when showered with the entrails of freshly-killed animals.

A violently nauseous man is incapable of violence.

A variety of readily-obtainable substances provoke an irresistible biological urge to vomit.

#### Scenario Five:

*War is any means of breaking the will of the enemy. Love is a means of waging war. A love-war breaks the will of the enemy through desire. In a love-war, the enemy is defeated when his desire to be loved by the enemy is greater than his fear of the consequences of defeat.*

VD EPIDEMIC AMONG POLICE LAID TO HIPPY DEMONSTRATORS VD EPIDEMIC LAID TO POLICE LAID AMONG HIPPY DEMONSTRATORS VD EPIDEMIC AMONG POLICE LAID TO VD EPIDEMIC AMONG HIPPY DEMONSTRATORS LAID TO POLICE VD

#### LA COPS MOBBED BY GROUPIES

Los Angeles, Calif. Three hundred Los Angeles riot police were brutally sexually assaulted today by a screaming mob of several thousand naked fifteen-to-eighteen-year-old groupies. Five rock stars had to be summoned to restore order using charisma and amplified guitars. The management of the Shrine Auditorium threatened to revoke the LAPD's entertainment licence if this outrage were to be repeated.

"Blue cloth and brass buttons turn me on," explained the seventeen-year-old President of the Cop-You-Laters, the new fan club which is causing serious concern in anti-government circles. "I just can't help it, the sight of a nightstick makes me throb inside."

"Shocking!" declared a rock star who preferred to remain anonymous. "These groupies should be setting an example for our impressionable police. Do they treat their fathers like that?"

#### Scenario Six:

*War is any means of breaking the will of the enemy. Guilt is a means of waging war. A guilt-war breaks the will of the enemy through remorse. In a guilt-war, the enemy is defeated when his remorse for the actions he is committing is greater than his fear of the consequences of defeat.*

#### *The Arsenal of Entropy*

Shit is a substance easily obtained by anyone. It is neither colorless, odorless, nor tasteless. Its odor, taste, appearance, and concept provoke severe disgust in many people, including police, public officials, and military personnel.

#### UNIVERSITY DEMANDS DEMONSTRATOR CONTROL OF POLICE

Berkeley, Calif. At a news conference called after the

latest Berkeley riot, the Chancellor of the University of California demanded tighter demonstrator control of police. "The situation would never have gotten out of hand if the police had been forced to summon demonstrators earlier," he declared. "It's time the anarchists stopped coddling the police."

#### Scenario Seven:

*War is any means of breaking the will of the enemy. Reality-alteration is a means of waging war. A reality-alteration-war breaks the will of the enemy through alienation. In a reality-alteration-war, the enemy is defeated when his fear of alienation from the current reality is greater than his fear of the consequences of defeat.*

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT 'EM EAT 'EM IF YOU BEAT 'EM YOU CAN'T EAT 'EM IF YOU CAN'T BEAT 'EM YOU CAN'T EAT 'EM

#### MUGGER CLEARED OF POLICE BRUTALITY RAP

New York, N.Y. Superior Court Judge Arthur Cranz today dismissed charges of intent to commit police brutality against Herbert Smith, 29. Smith, a member of the International Brotherhood of Muggers, had been accused of police brutality against Patrolman David MacDougal of the New York City Vice Squad, when the latter's nightstick was bugged during a routine mugging in New York's Central Park. Judge Cranz ruled that since both men were under the influence of capitalist propaganda at the time, intent could not be proven. However, all three paternity suits arising out of the incident are still pending in civil court.

#### Scenario Eight:

*War is any means of breaking the will of the enemy. Identity is a means of waging war. An identity-war breaks the will of the enemy through absorption. In an identity-war, the enemy is defeated when his degree of merger with the enemy is greater than his fear of the consequences of defeat.*

#### SECRETARY OF TREASURY ABSCONDS

New York, N.Y. The Secretary of the Treasury today announced his formal absence with the National Debt at a press conference held in a Wall Street crash-pad. He told reporters that he planned to sell the Debt to the Mafia as a tax-loss, deposit the proceeds in municipal bonds, and accept a Presidential appointment to the Mothers of Invention.

#### Scenario Nine:

*War is any means of breaking the will of the enemy. Chaos is a means of waging war. A chaos-war breaks the will of the enemy through entropy. In a chaos-war, the enemy is defeated when further action on his part becomes the consequences of defeat.*

#### BECAUSE WE LOVE EACH OTHER, THAT'S WHY!

Reno, Nevada. At a press conference in Reno today, the President and the Vice President announced that they had been married during the night in a private ceremony conducted by the Chief of Naval Operations.

"I just don't see what all the fuss is about," the Vice President said. "We're just two people in love, that's all."

"This time it's for keeps!" the President assured reporters as the newlyweds left for a two-week honeymoon in Niagara Falls.

# LIKE FATHER

JON HARTRIDGE

Fingest, intent upon rape, hid behind the jereboam tree. He was well concealed. Its lower half was as thick as 20 men.

She passed by here every day at about this time.

Time?

Fingest smiled to himself.

Time was everything.

And the sex-clock was telling him that time was ripe.

At the top of the tree, way above the video camera hovering over him, so high up that the scabrous patterns etched by the huge bark-eating trench beetles could no longer easily be discerned, the great green fronds stirred sluggishly. Then the air was still again, and so were they.

A few yards away a family of catarrhine long-tails, in mindless pursuit of an evolutionary dead-end, squabbled over the last banana-nut on their tree.

Fingest sneered at their gay and angry chatter. He was pleased that Grandpa was not of their kind.

A small reptile climbed importantly on to his left boot. He scraped it off with the sole of his right, and spent a few moments watching it struggle with the problem of suddenly being in two pieces.

The minutes passed.

Fingest waited composedly.

He thought with pleasure of the tiny wound in her behind. She would have blamed it on a dagger-fly. But its cause had been the entry into her flesh of a sub-micro-miniature thermometer/hormone analyser.

What a lovely shot! Fingest smacked his lips at the memory of the little missile being guided unerringly into her left buttock from 300 yards.

And that little missile, scarcely visible to the unaided eye, was now reflecting a radio frequency that told him she was on heat.

So it was to be today.

The receiver clipped on to his ear lobe gave a respectful bleep.

It meant that she had left the caves and was probably

making her way towards his ambush.

It was unusual for any of her kind to make a habit of walking alone. They moved as a team; so dependent was any one upon the rest that the pack resembled a creature of infinitely adaptable shape more than a community of separate creatures.

She alone seemed capable of detaching herself.

Her fellows, depending upon each other for survival as they did, were slowly establishing a form of communication that was eventually to result in their ascendancy over creation. Already their place in the order of things was assured.

But she had gone one step further than they. Her setting aside of one small part of each day to perform an individual act indicated that she was a cut above the others, perhaps ten thousand years ahead of them.

Or so Fingest thought.

Whatever the evolutionary facts, she was more worthy of his attentions than the others, and anyway was the easiest to isolate from the pack.

Fingest peered into his optical extroscope.

Up yonder, through the trees, where the path traversed a clearing of some slight eminence, you could see the creatures as they crossed.

And he was rewarded by the sight of her.

At 300 yards, she looked almost sapiens. There was something about the set of her shoulders which said that the anthropoidal inheritance had already been usurped by a higher promise.

There was, too, an awareness and a curiosity in the carriage of that flat-topped, low-browed head.

Or so Fingest thought. For a crazy instant he considered the distant image to be attractive.

Come, come, he thought. Don't fool yourself, brother.

He forced, himself to remember Marcia. Pale, blonde, IQ 155. Then Phyllis, the blue-eyed quadroon who sang to him at night when he paid her, came into his mind.





He thought of his mother.

That helped most of all.

He was able to recall his quarry as she would appear close to.

She would be hairy, rank-smelling, leathery skinned, with whites of eyes pink and no bigger than a frightened dog's.

Around her lids and nostrils would be dried mucus, and her wispy beard would carry the remains of several previous meals. Where her hair was thickset, on her head, her sex, her forearms and lower legs, across her shoulders to her armpits and down her back, the skittering of parasites could be discerned by a close observer.

He had noticed that only in the area immediately surrounding her nipples was there any evidence of that supple epidermis enjoyed by advanced members of the species.

Members of the pack knew how to clean themselves in the rivers, but they employed this talent infrequently, and were as yet maladroit. The cats whom they slew were cleaner, being able to lick away the dirt from their coats and claws and cocks and cunts and

Fingest trembled. Mind your mind he told himself. You know what you are.

The id retreated, hobbling back to its caverns. Fingest fumbled, then found the first thread of thought, taking it up again with determination.

He sighed. Why had humanity not retained an ability to lick itself clean, he wondered plaintively. So nice. He felt a fastidious tremor run over his spine. It was somehow reassuring.

The bleeps were growing more insistent. Then the sound of her footfalls and her breathing came to him direct above the noise made by the receiver.

He stepped out on to the path and confronted her. The camera swivelled to follow his movements.

The fear in her eyes fought with wonderment.

Fingest aimed the nozzle at her, squeezed the button and let her fall.

Tucking the anaesthetic spray-can into his time-suit satchel, he eased on his surgical mask and walked round to her head. He squatted, hooked his gloved hands under her armpits and dragged her backwards from the track, to a place where they could not be seen—except by the camera.

You never knew. Her pack might be on their way to the watering-place, and he couldn't afford to risk letting them disturb him.

He laid her on her back and returned to where they had left the path in order to cover up his tracks.

That done, he made his way, panting a little, back to where he had left her.

The hover camera, its eye oscillating madly in the swiftly varying light and shade of the forest, followed him at a decent distance, and kept him in focus all the time.

He knelt down in front of her, pulled her knees up, and parted them.

Fingest cursed as first one, then the other, of her legs obeyed the tensile demands of slumbering muscles and straightened themselves.

Finally he used his body to keep her thighs where he wanted them.

He ordered the camera to pause, and then he took a look.

Fingest noticed that the clitoris was larger than the few he had had the luck to encounter in the 23rd century. The labia, both major and minor, though, were less well developed, and the pink-grey flesh of it all lay open and ready, glistening a little in the sunlight.

The sweat trickled over the skin that covered his coccyx. It reminded him of what he had to do.

He ordered the camera to roll again.

Then he did it.

The seed was his.

The syringe was on hire from the Paterplanina A.I.D.

Corporation.

Fingest, following medical advice, held her in that same position for as long as he could bear it.

The rays of the sun, falling ever nearer to the vertical through the foliage, gave way to cloud and, when the storm had passed, returned to slant from the opposite direction.

His muscles ached. The bugs were getting through his fading repellent. He was drenched. He was starving. He was steaming.

Surely that was enough? Surely by now enough time elapsed for his sperm to have found the ovum?

Time, after all, was everything.

So Fingest moved.

Groaning as he did so, he forced his stiff leg muscles to take him back to the track. He could see no footprints. Maybe they had been washed away by the rain.

He went down to the river, to make sure. No. They weren't there. The coast was clear.

Relieved, he made his way back to where she lay in oblivion, carrying his seed. Again, he hooked his hands under her armpits and dragged her back to the track.

Before spraying her nostrils with the revival compound, Fingest shook his cavewoman by the hand.

And the camera recorded it all.

Back in his chronocar, Fingest took a shower and played back some of the video recording, savouring in anticipation the effect it would have upon the Time Research Authority Committee and the 23rd century as a whole.

He giggled. Then he held his breath. Then he wiped himself dry.

He sat down in front of his instrument panel and gripped the time lever. The chronocar, in obedience to his manipulations, compressed the next nine months into an apparent 50 seconds. The world outside turned colourless as day chased night across the sky five times a second. All the customary sounds of creation were instantly whisked into unimaginably high frequencies infinitely beyond the capacity of any earth-bred ear and the only sound to remain was that of the planet groaning as it pursued three-quarters of its annual ellipse.

During those 50 seconds she swelled and burst open, bringing forth a young one, the like of which the pack had never seen.

When the chronocar stopped, the infant was still recovering from the prodding it had received from the females, who could not believe that such a fragile-looking child could be real. (Its mother, being unable to recall the circumstances of its conception, had a few doubts, too).

But real it was, and it was beginning to thrive upon the supply of milk from those leathery breasts, milk which was a little thin by 23rd century standards, but abundant in quantity.

Fingest took the long route round to the cliff-top that overhung their caves at the meeting place of forest and savannah.

Once there, he peered through his electroscope and was able quickly to pick out the young one that was his, recognising it by the fairness and relative delicacy of its skin.

He noticed with satisfaction that it was a male, and considered that the size of its cranium in relation to its body was more than gratifying when compared with those of the other young.

A quick look round confirmed that his hover camera was taking it all in.

If the infant survived, it would probably become

leader of the pack, simply by virtue of its intelligence. That would be all to the good although fundamentally irrelevant to Fingest's purpose.

When that infant, hundreds of thousands of years ahead of its time, procreated, it would establish a line that would advance the evolutionary progress of the hominid by a gigantic stride.

That was his purpose; to introduce homo sapiens to the world.

It was difficult to see how he could fail. How the names of the great would diminish before his!

Fingest whistled cheerfully in opposition to the raucous birdsong as he made his way back again to the chronocar, concealed in a pleasant clearing on dry and flinty ground.

He sometimes wished it had been nearer the caves, but it was nice to get away, generally speaking.

After clambering into the vehicle Fingest cleaned himself up again, ate heartily, and programmed a two-year/ten-hour compression schedule before settling down to sleep.

The months passed quietly, with only a touch of acidosis to mar their perfection.

Fingest arose refreshed and jovial, enlivened by a sense of destiny. After showering and shaving, and putting on some clean kit, he stepped out of the car into 450,000 B.C. again.

His clearing had spread somewhat, the surrounding undergrowth having given way here and there to grass. The shrubs he had chosen to conceal the chronocar were flourishing.

Satisfied, Fingest strode away, with his hover-camera in deferential pursuit.

As he walked towards the clifftop he surprised a herd of thigh-high perissodactyla, who galloped away as though by starter's orders. He signalled the camera to follow their progress, which it did, until they disappeared.

When he got to his destination, Fingest cursed himself for hurrying unnecessarily. The mist was too thick to permit a view of the hominid pack below. He sat down to wait.

His daydream after a while became infected with the sense of another presence. He turned round and saw that beneath the faithful lens of the hover-camera there was another eye.

Its oblong pupil blandly surveyed the landscape of which Fingest was a part, seeing him and yet not seeing him.

Fingest felt the rage he thought he had left behind well up within him. With trembling fingers he groped in his time-suit satchel for the missile guider. He found it and levelled it at the eye.

His rage gave way to exquisite pleasure as that all-seeing, all-ignoring pupil crumpled and clouded over as the missile penetrated its centre.

The paleognathus to which the eye belonged took off from its temporary resting-place with a groan and a squawk and a thunderous clap of powerful and inefficient wings.

Unable to see, but incapable of realising that this disability made purposeful locomotion an impossibility, the great hen made, by chance, for Fingest.

He scrambled out of the way, and recovered in time to see the huge semi-flightless bird go headlong over the cliff.

The rumblings and clatterings caused by the creature's descent were replaced by a series of bellows and a thin scream from down below when it fell on to some of the hominids.

Fingest stopped laughing when he realised that he



had rolled into the fresh droppings of some large carnivore.

But suddenly, one thought drove out all the others.

That scream - it could have been a young one.

Oh no, he thought, it must not be . . . him.

He scrambled to the cliff edge and peered frantically into the haze.

At first he could see nothing. Then the mist at the back of a prospering sun thinned and cleared, and he could perceive the pack clustering round the dead paleognathus.

He searched among them for some sign, but they were

pressed too close.

They broke up. Fingest noticed with despair that one was a female who appeared to be grieving over a small creature in her arms. Others were clustered around her. Some stroked her head others touched her limbs. When they dispersed, others came up to do the same, preventing Fingest from seeing her or her little one properly.

He felt anger surge up again, but controlled it. He would see, in time.

Then his heart gave a leap of pleasure.

Sitting on a rock, a little apart from a group of young ones, sat a still, small, unhappy two-year old, plainly distinguishable from the others by his paleness, his low degree of hirsuteness and the size of his cranium.

Fingest's relief was unbounded.

He hadn't relished the thought of having to sire another.

Well . . . not really.

The small ones started to play together in the dust as he watched them. Their game consisted largely of butting each other with their heads and indulging in a form of wrestling.

Occasionally one would break from the group to go to Fingest's offspring and pull him by the head-hair or an ear, or an arm, in an effort to get him to join in.

But he simply cringed and attempted to detach himself, and remained where he was.

Fingest noticed that his chest and face were scarred. He assumed that this was because the infant was falling frequently in his attempts to walk, and took it as a good sign, for many, larger infants were still making no attempt to rise from all fours.

It seemed to Fingest that the pack was shrinking until he noticed that all the adults were female. This meant that the males were out hunting and the humbers below in fact indicated that the pack was prospering and increasing.

After some time the pack, adults and young stopped what they were doing and congregated round a large rocky prominence in front of the cliff. One of the older females stepped forward, and pulled aside a boulder, revealing a cave, about three feet high, into which she crawled.

She reappeared after a few moments, rump first, pulling after her a sorry-looking carcass. The females pitched in, pulling off what pieces of meat they could find, handing bits behind them to the young gathered round.

Only Fingest's son remained apart.

Finally the skeleton was picked clean and several of the adults tossed the bones into the surrounding scrub.

Only then did the female that Fingest had chosen nearly three years before go up to her child. She removed something from her mouth and placed it into his, before ambulating away.

The child rose and trotted a few steps after her before falling. She looked round as he screamed, and then sat down dully to listen to his wailing.

Fingest, feeling pleased despite the smell clinging to his time-suit, began to make his way once more back to the chronocar.

He moved cautiously, for he did not want to encounter any returning hunting party who would see him as easy meat, a simple prey for their wooden weapons.

The following morning or, that is to say, a decade later, Fingest awoke to the rainy season. It was not cold, but the world was sodden.

The father of mankind, over-anxious to see progress (meaning the onset of his son's puberty) had made a three-month programming error.

The going was difficult. He swore, but decided against doing a fresh programme just to improve the weather. That would be extravagant.

Fingest set off through the downpour towards his cliff-top vantage point again. He had settled down to a steady pace, though slipping now and then, when suddenly there was a commotion behind him. He threw himself into some thick undergrowth. The hover camera followed him. Frantically he over-rode its automatic controls to bring the apparatus down to the ground where it could not be seen.

No sooner had he done so that half a dozen young hominid males came running by uttering hoarse yelps that sounded something like laughter.

One of them tripped and fell over a hidden pothole. The others ran on. The one who had fallen attempted to rise but failed. He sat there moaning and fondling an injured limb. Then he began to make noises of alarm as well as of pain, and he began trying to move, as though away from some threat before him, by pushing at the ground with his arms, and his good leg and shuffling backwards on his seat.

Following the creature's alarmed gaze, Fingest observed a bright red figure approaching. As it drew near he saw that it was another young hominid. It was moving a bit awkwardly, carrying a broken branch that was too large for it to handle with ease.

The cranium was unusually large, the posture remarkably erect . . . . yes, indeed it was his. As it drew nearer the closer view revealed that stuck to the scarlet body here and there were the skins of some of the berries which had been used to stain it.

A prehistoric practical joke. Fingest, as the butt of so many of the 23rd century variety, was reminded of the futile rage felt by the victims of such tricks.

The scarlet pursuer stopped in his chase of the others and stood over the wounded creature. He bared his teeth once, compressed his lips, and growled.

Without changing his expression again he clubbed the other creature so that it keeled over. Fingest called his camera up from the ground and nodded it to the scene.

The injured creature was levered over with the other's club until it was face upwards and then screamed as the weapon was brought down hard. It was belaboured about the thorax and abdomen until the blood came spurting from its mouth.

Fingest, who had so often done much the same in his imaginings, applauded silently when the performance was over. Then he crept behind his offspring and sent a cloud of anaesthetic in his direction.

The hover-camera watched Fingest carry the naked young body to the clearing where the chronocar was parked. There he tied one of its arms to a sapling before reviving it. He had taken the precaution of putting some tranquilizer additive to the revival spray.

But the founder of all mankind was annoyed at the lack of interest shown by his captive upon regaining consciousness; he seemed disappointingly docile, eating all that was offered without reserve, exhibiting no sign of surprise or distress at finding himself tied up, failing totally to react to the other's presence.

Resisting the temptation to let his offspring rot, Fingest dug about in the soil. It did not take him long to find the kind of flint that he sought, and he began chipping at it with another.

He had not intended to interfere - not believing in more personal involvement than was strictly necessary - but if his son were to be the odd one out, the object of persecution, perhaps, in the pack, then he must have a weapon with which to defend himself. For he had more than himself to defend.

And if he could see how to fashion a flint, then he would also have a skill with which to ingratiate himself to the pack - and earn its protection, to say nothing of its favours.

Fingest, making the world's first (or last) stone blade, wondered if the creature that was his offspring

had yet . . . . he looked at its genitalia, and decided that it couldn't have. He sighed.

When the blade was finished, Fingest demonstrated its uses. First - with a missile - he brought down a large lagomorph cropping nearby, and brought it back to where his son sat dully waiting.

With three blows of the blade, he separated the lagomorph's head from its body. Fingest discerned a form of comprehension and pleasure express itself upon those sullen features.

Then he skinned the animal with the assistance of the sharp flint and sensed that he was being watched closely, by both camera and captive.

Hoping that the lesson would sink in, he cut the pelt into strips and laid them out side by side. Cutting some tying cord at first into similar lengths, he knotted them together again to lash the blade at right angles to a stout stick (would the creature learn the purpose and art of thong making from that? He should)

With the axe he had thus fashioned, Fingest chopped down a thin, straight sapling. After looking to see if there had been any reaction, he quickly untied the blade from the axe haft and retied it to one end of the sapling to make a spear.

He drove the spear at the lagomorph's dead body, making a great wound. Could the creature, his son, fail to learn from that? Then Fingest hurled the spear from him. It was not a very good throw, and when it landed, the shaft fell off. But at least the blade had stuck into the ground, and his son would have been able to observe the flight and trajectory, and work out the possibilities . . . . .

He retrieved the sharp-edged stone and took it back to where his son sat tied to the tree. A few seconds'

hacking at the cord released the bonds, and Fingest stood back, smiled, and offered the flint to his mongrel offspring.

After hesitating some seconds the other took it and, as Fingest turned to go, raised it above his head preparatory to smashing it down on to his father's skull.

Fingest junior spent the rest of the rainy season in blissful sloth and gluttony. He found concealed behind some shrubs in that clearing a strange cave, warm as summer, light as midday.

Within, there was a store of exotic and delicious foods, all covered in a peel which reminded him of skin.

He munched his way through his father's food store, learning quickly that the plastic peel was inedible.

By the time the food was all gone, the boy had achieved a civilised and fatal obesity.

But eating his way to an imminent death was not enough to stop the unhappy little hominid from gorging himself further.

He reasted himself upon an over-ripe Fingest and when the jackals came to make a feast of him, he could scarcely move.

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# books

## R. Glyn Jones: Halts in the Becoming

... *F* is for *Fame and Failure*, the two footmen. *G* is for *Glamour*, the commodity with a difference. *H* is for *Hell*, the road to which is marked with good notices. *I* is for *Imagination*, the ability to live 1000 lives. *J* is for *Justice* that is always crude. *K* is for *Karl Marx* who put man first ... John Berger is one of our most eloquent and stimulating writers on art, at his best when denouncing effete and decadent capitalist painting, but less successfully defending the alternatives; his last book (*Art and Revolution*, reviewed in NEW WORLDS 190) offered the work of the Soviet sculptor Neizvestny as an example and a symbol of "revolutionary consciousness," but was seriously diminished when political interpretations distorted artistic ones: clear vision spoiled by red-tinted spectacles. A new collection of essays and the republication in paperback of his earliest essays offer an opportunity to redress the balance.

One theme is persistent through both books, and that is the incompatibility of art and private property which, though it might seem predictable and even trite from so committed a Marxist, is at the root of most of Berger's writing and, more important for us, is what separates him from most other art critics. Their function is more or less subservient to the current art market, whose fashions, sensationalism, exclusiveness, triviality and sheer commercialism might even make a non-Marxist shudder from time to time. Berger's disgust at the entire art Establishment produces some admirably derisive writing: "Walk down a street of private galleries - but it is unnecessary to describe the dealers with their faces like silk purses. Everything they say is said to disguise their proper purpose. If you could fuck works of art they would be pimps: but, if that were the case, one might

assume a kind of love; as it is they dream of money and honour.

"Critics? John Russell speaks for the vast majority of his colleagues when - without any sense of incongruity or shame - he explains how one of the excitements of art criticism lies in the opportunity it affords of acquiring an 'adventurous' private collection." The other side of this coin is "... the tragic farce of students being automatically encouraged to equip themselves to teach simply because teaching is the most obvious way of their earning their living and retaining a maximum of spare time for their 'work' - seldom because they have a vocation for it. Thus a few fortunate students have the prospect of going to Art Schools to teach painters to teach painters to teach!"

The essays which have least ideological content are those about individual paintings or individual artists of earlier centuries, and in these Berger writes with a delicate perception and sympathy which contract well with his more energetic manner. In a diverting piece of detective-work, for instance, he tries to answer the question of why Goya should have painted the same figure with *and* without her clothes. A careful comparison of the two paintings suggests to him that the second is imagined from the first: her breasts retain their corseted shape, the upper part of her left arm is as thick as the pleated sleeve in the dressed version, the whole form seems to have no weight ... Yet Goya was one of the most skilled of all draughtsmen, so why should the naked figure be so unconvincing? Berger's answer is that *The Maja Dressed* was painted as an informal portrait, then Goya became obsessed with an image of her undressed: "He was haunted by the fact that he imagined her naked - that is to say he imagined her flesh with all its provocation ... He painted it to exorcise a ghost. Yet to exorcise her as a ghost, to call her by her proper name, he had to identify her as closely as possible with the painting of her dressed. He was not painting a nude. He was painting the apparition of a nude within a dressed woman.

That is why he was tied so faithfully to the dressed version and why his usual powers of invention were so unusually inhibited."

And so Berger has, I think, two distinct and separate abilities as a writer: the first is a robust talent for communicating very clearly to the reader the indignation he feels about the state of the world - writing hustled along, as it were, by the force of his convictions; the second is an unusual skill and sensitivity in analysing sensation. Apart from two subjective accounts of seeing and drawing, the essays in the earlier collection, *Permanent Red* (Methuen: University Paperbacks, 12/6), generally employ the first of these much more than the second. Ten years ago, when they were written, Berger tells us that every word he wrote was subjected to close editorial scrutiny and that once, when he ventured to suggest that Henry Moore's latest work showed a decline from his earlier achievements, the British Council telephoned Moore to apologise for such a regrettable thing having occurred in London. But the style remained aggressive, and Berger insisted that an artist must commit himself politically in a way that had not formerly been so necessary because, when less was known about the world and when political systems were more easily changed, there could always be hope for the future. In the 1950's political thought polarized fairly



John Berger

distinctly between Moscow and Washington. With Cuba and other countries showing new possibilities the picture has since become more diffuse, and the Left need no longer look to the USSR for their spiritual home; but when Berger wrote that "A valid work of art promises in some way or another the possibility of an increase, an improvement ..." the nature of that "improvement" seemed obvious enough.

In his new book, *The Moment of Cubism* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 36s)

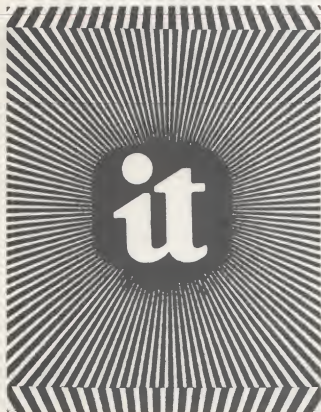


Berger's distrust of the Establishment and his dissatisfaction with bourgeois art are as strong as ever, but now his criticisms are a good deal more constructive, and the two aspects of his writing are made to blend more skillfully. Thus, while questioning the way in which art museums are run, he makes original and promising suggestions as to how a museum could be used

to demonstrate the historical processes surrounding a particular work, or a series of works that need not be adjacent in style, subject or period. This "historical" purpose also forms a large part of Berger's approach to criticism, and is at the heart of his long essay on the Cubist painters whose name gives this book its title. The years from 1907 to 1914 represented an extra-

ordinary moment of optimism and revolt, at once a realization that an old order had passed and a defiant proclamation of what might be possible. Two wars shattered this vision and irreversibly changed life. The paintings of Picasso, Braque, Leger and Gris remain, announcing the start of a journey that was never made - but for Berger they contain the clue to all art, including that of the present, as when a piece of music begins "we suddenly become aware of the previous silence at the same moment as our attention is concentrated upon following sequences and resolutions which will contain the desired."

Art, then, has a clear social function to fulfil and John Berger's critical approach might be encapsulated in his question: "Does this work help or encourage men to know and claim their social rights?" A single work is . . . only a halt in the becoming and not a frozen aim on its own. It is perhaps a tribute to Berger's writing that a decadent non-Marxist like myself, who derives great enjoyment from purely imaginative and purely decorative art, should also consider his books amongst the most valuable criticism currently being produced. I would like, one day, to visit his museum.



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